



Emails to the early childhood education and care sector

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Far North Queensland emergency: support extended

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Far North Queensland affected by Tropical Cyclone Jasper and subsequent flooding.

The period of emergency now applies from 12 December 2023 to 5 January 2024 in these local government areas:

- Cairns Regional Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a period of emergency](#).

Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after a period of emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:



- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Learn more on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [qld.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 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 our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Keep an eye on [qld.gov.au](#) for current emergency information in your region.



From the department

Have a happy holiday season

We would like to recognise and thank you for your commitment to early childhood education and care in 2023. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Christmas - New Year period

We remind you that the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) helpdesk will close at 12.30 pm AEDT on Friday and reopen at 9 am AEDT Tuesday 2 January 2024.

We have helpful information about what you need to know over the [Christmas - New Year period](#) on our website.

Help families find you in 2024

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

Make sure your fee and vacancy details are current so families can find you in the new year.

Check your fee and vacancy details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Stay in the know

Make sure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important updates in 2024.

Check your contact details through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

You can also [join our Facebook group](#) to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector in 2024.

Geccko: new online learning now live

Introducing Geccko - your new place to get early childhood compliance knowledge online.

Geccko is our new online learning platform designed to help you understand your obligations under Family Assistance Law (FAL). FAL sets the rules for administering CCS.

On Geccko, you can:

- complete self-paced e-learning courses
- download course certificates upon completion
- access other resources such as videos and tip sheets.

The courses are suitable for all staff across all approved care types.

The following courses are currently available:

- Overview of FAL and National Law



- Fit and proper person requirements
- Persons with management or control
- FAL notification requirements
- Understanding enrolments
- Reporting sessions of care
- Fraud awareness
- Electronic payment of gap fees.

[Register for Geccko.](#)

Period of emergency in Far North Queensland

A CCS period of emergency is in place for parts of Far North Queensland affected by Tropical Cyclone Jasper and subsequent flooding.

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during an emergency.](#)

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

Spotlight on the sector

The National Workforce Census is coming

We're conducting the ECEC National Workforce Census from April to July next year.

The National Workforce Census helps us develop and measure policies and programs for the ECEC sector.

The census is compulsory for all CCS-approved providers and services.

We'll send you a letter with more details, including how to register, in the new year.

In the meantime, please ensure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System. Check your details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

Find out more about the [National Workforce Census](#) on our website.

To get alerts, [subscribe to this weekly newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Submitting session reports

Your obligation to submit session reports on time still applies over the Christmas–New Year period.

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



Please be mindful of these timeframes if you are closing over the holidays.

Learn more about [submitting session reports](#) on our website.

For families

Find child care in 2024

Did you know StartingBlocks.gov.au is the one place where you can find and compare early childhood education and care services?

On the Starting Blocks website, you can:

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

Visit StartingBlocks.gov.au to start searching.



Far North Queensland emergency update: support extended

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in place for parts of Far North Queensland affected by Tropical Cyclone Jasper and subsequent flooding. We've also expanded the period of emergency to 3 additional local government areas (LGAs).

The period of emergency now applies from 12 to 27 December for the following LGAs:

- Cairns Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council.

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

Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a period of emergency](#).

Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after a period of emergency](#).



Other disaster support

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at qld.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 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 our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Keep an eye on qld.gov.au for current emergency information in your region.



Ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper: period of emergency

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland affected by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper.

The period of emergency applies from 12 to 19 December in the following local government areas:

- Cairns Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a period of emergency](#).

Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after a period of emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out more on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [qld.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 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 our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [qld.gov.au](#) for current emergency information in your region.



From the department

Get ready for the National Workforce Census

The fifth Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census will take place from April to July 2024. Take action now so you don't miss out.

The National Workforce Census helps us develop and measure policies and programs for the early childhood education and care sector. **It is compulsory for all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved providers and services.**

It is critical that your contact details are up to date in the CCS System so you can participate in the census.

Please take the following action now:

- check your provider and service level contact details and update them if they are not correct
- check contact details for all persons with management or control (PMCs) and update them if they are not correct
- check you have identified all PMCs and add any new or missing PMCs
- remove anyone who has stopped having management or control.

You can check and update your details via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Completing the National Workforce Census is part of your obligations under Family Assistance Law. We may take compliance action if you do not participate.

Find out more about the [National Workforce Census](#) on our website.

To get information and alerts about the census, [subscribe to this weekly newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#).

Latest CCS data now available

We've published data about CCS for the September quarter 2023.

We regularly issue a summary report about CCS-approved care in Australia. The report includes data on child care usage, services, fees and subsidies in Australia.

Key findings from the September quarter 2023 include:

- 1,438,150 children from 1,009,500 families used CCS-approved care
- 14,528 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 27.1 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$12.20
- the Australian Government paid \$3.56 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [September quarter 2023 report](#)



Inclusion Support Portal enhancements

We've made enhancements to the Inclusion Support Portal.

The Inclusion Support Portal is the online platform where providers and services interact with the [Inclusion Support Program](#).

We've summarised the changes below for providers who use the portal:

- **We've made changes to the home page to reduce confusion.** We've moved the **children** tile under **cases and claims** and removed tiles that are no longer necessary.
- **We've made adding children to an Inclusion Support Case easier.** Children on both formal and informal enrolments will now appear in a single list when selecting children. You can also update the child's details during the selection process.
- **We've strengthened the parent/guardian consent process.** You must now declare that you've received parent/guardian consent, and upload the signed consent form, before any personal information about a child is recorded in the system. There is also an optional declaration to access existing documents linked to the child.
- **We've made changes to clarify child eligibility outcomes.** The Inclusion Development Fund Manager can now record whether appropriate documentary evidence has been provided and make a note about the assessment outcome on the Inclusion Support Case.
- **We've streamlined system access requests.** The system will now only allow one active access request per user to reduce confusion. We've also clarified role names and descriptions on the access request page.

Learn more about the [Inclusion Support Portal](#) on our website.

Reminder: CCCF business support still available

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) grant recipients can get free business support.

Business support helps grant recipients maintain and operate financially viable and sustainable services.

The support is available until July 2024.

A total of 38 CCCF services have so far used business support this financial year. They have been helped with:

- conducting a business review
- identifying cost drivers and savings
- reviewing operations and business planning
- reviewing financial processes/improvements.

For more information, [go to our website](#).

Preparing for emergencies

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

If you haven't already, take the following steps today to prepare your service for an emergency:

- Go to business.gov.au and follow the steps to create an emergency management plan. A good emergency management plan prepares you and your business for unexpected disruptions. As part of your plan, you should identify the types of disasters you are exposed to and check you have [appropriate insurance](#) in place.



- Familiarise yourself with support available in the event of a CCS period of emergency via [our website](#).
- Make sure your contact details are up to date in the CCS System so you don't miss important updates. Check your details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Make sure to tell us if you close your service due to an emergency. You can do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- [Join our Facebook group](#) and turn on post notifications to get the latest alerts.

2023–24 Christmas–New Year period

Don't forget to review our information about the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period.

We've got information about CCS payments, session reports, absences and service closures over the holiday period.

Read about [CCS and the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period](#) on our website

Spotlight on the sector

Draft Early Years Strategy released

The Australian Government is developing an Early Years Strategy to shape its long-term vision for the education, development and wellbeing of young children in Australia and their families.

The Minister for Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, and the Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, are leading the development of the strategy in collaboration with other responsible Ministers.

The strategy will be the overarching framework for the next 10 years of government investment in the early years.

You can provide feedback on the draft.

Go to the [Department of Social Services consultation website](#) to see:

- a survey open for community feedback
- the draft strategy.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Did you know you must report some working with children checks to us?

In certain circumstances, you must report working with children checks (WWCCs) in the CCS System.

You must do this for:

- Family Day Care educators
- In Home Care educators
- PMCs and persons responsible at the service that are required to have a WWCC.

For these people, you must report:

- new checks within 7 days



- changes to existing checks within 24 hours of becoming aware of the change.

Report WWCCs via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

Find out more about your [WWCC obligations](#).

For families

Find child care

Did you know [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) is the one place where you can find and compare early childhood and outside school hours education and care services?

On the Starting Blocks website, you can:

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

Visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to start searching.



From the department

Support for families transitioning to work

Do you have families transitioning to work from income support at your service? They may be able to get extra help with the cost of early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) transition to work is for families who:

- are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)
- have a family income under \$80,000
- get an [income support payment](#)
- have an active Job Plan or Participation Plan, if required
- are engaged in a [recognised work, study or training activity](#).

The number of hours of subsidised care will depend on the family's activity level. They'll get the lower of either:

- 95% of the fee charged where it's equal to or below the hourly rate cap
- up to 95% of the hourly rate cap where the fee charged is above the hourly rate cap.

The length of time a family can get the transition to work subsidy depends on whether they are studying, looking for a job, working or training.

Families can apply through their [Centrelink online account](#) or by visiting a Centrelink office.

We have information for providers about [ACCS transition to work](#) on our website.

Families should go to the [Services Australia website](#).

2023-24 Christmas-New Year period

Find out what you need to know about CCS and the 2023-24 Christmas-New Year period.

The key things to know are:

- the CCS Helpdesk will close at 12.30 pm AEDT Friday 22 December 2023 and reopen at 9 am AEDT Tuesday 2 January 2024
- you must not submit session reports or claim absences when your service is closed, unless it is a public holiday or during a period of emergency
- you must report shorter hours if you close early on Friday 22 December
- session reports submitted on public holidays may experience short delays in processing or payment
- you must collect the gap fee when claiming absences on a public holiday
- you must tell us if you are closing your service or changing operating hours.

Read more about [CCS and the 2023-24 Christmas-New Year period](#) on our website.



Spotlight on the sector

Meeting National Quality Standards: best annual result

The 2023 National Quality Framework (NQF) Annual Performance Report shows 89% of services as Meeting National Quality Standards (NQS) or above.

The result, as at 30 June 2023, is the best on record.

Quality has continued to improve across the sector. When ratings were first published in 2013, 57% of services were rated as Meeting NQS or above. This rose to 81% 3 years ago, and 88% last year.

The annual report, from the [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority \(ACECQA\)](#), focuses on:

- children's health and safety
- educational program and practice
- children from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds
- workforce
- families' understanding of quality.

ACECQA chief executive officer Gabrielle Sinclair said the report reflected the consistent efforts of services, teachers and educators to improve programs and practices for the benefit of children and their families.

Read the [2023 NQF Annual Performance Report on ACECQA's website](#).

Productivity Commission draft report published

The Productivity Commission draft report from its inquiry into the ECEC system is now available.

The inquiry is considering options that improve or support:

- affordable and quality ECEC services
- developmental and educational outcomes for children
- economic growth, including by enabling workforce participation
- outcomes for children and families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage, First Nations children and families, and children and families experiencing disability
- efficient and effective government investment in ECEC.

The inquiry started on 1 March 2023. Initial public consultation took place between 14 March and 19 May.

Further consultation will take place in early 2024. This will include a call for submissions on the draft report by 14 February and public forums in February and March.

The final report will be published by 30 June 2024.

To read the draft report and find out more about consultations, visit [the Productivity Commission website](#).

To get information and alerts about this report and the consultations, [subscribe to this weekly newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#).



Facts from Family Assistance Law

Update your contact details

Its important to keep your contact details up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System.

You must also identify all [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) in the system and keep their details up to date.

If this information is not correct:

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

Update your details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

For families

36 hours of Child Care Subsidy for First Nations children

Did you know you can get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) per fortnight for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your care, regardless of the amount of recognised activity you do?

If you care for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child and would like to get at least 36 hours of CCS, you'll need to call Services Australia on 136 150. It's voluntary to call.

You may get more than 36 hours of CCS per fortnight based on your circumstances and the amount of recognised activity you do.

Your CCS rate will continue to be based on your income. You must still pay the gap fee.

Learn more on the [Services Australia website](#).



Spotlight on the sector

Productivity Commission draft report published

Early this year, the Australian Government tasked the Productivity Commission with conducting an inquiry into Australia's early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

The Productivity Commission has now published its draft report.

The inquiry is considering options that improve or support:

- affordable and quality ECEC services
- developmental and educational outcomes for children
- economic growth, including by enabling workforce participation
- outcomes for children and families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage, First Nations children and families, and children and families experiencing disability
- efficient and effective government investment in ECEC.

The inquiry started on 1 March 2023. Initial public consultation took place between 14 March and 19 May.

Further consultation will take place in early 2024. This will include a call for submissions on the draft report by 14 February and public forums in February and March.

The final report will be published by 30 June 2024.

To read the draft report and submissions and for further information on the next round of consultations, [visit the Productivity Commission website](#).

To get information and alerts about this report and the consultations, [subscribe to this weekly newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#).

From the department

Inclusion Support Program review: report released

We have released the final report from the review into the [Inclusion Support Program \(ISP\)](#).

ISP helps children with additional needs participate in ECEC. It does this through tailored support and funding to services.

In February 2023, we engaged independent consultants to review the program.

The report found the program met its objectives when supports were delivered and accessed as intended.

However, the report identified resources could be better targeted and other improvements made to achieve greater inclusion of children in ECEC services.

The report:



- made 21 findings
- identified 21 short and medium-term opportunities
- recommended 5 longer-term opportunities to embed inclusion in the sector.

The report will inform the:

- [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission inquiry into ECEC prices](#)
- [Productivity Commission inquiry into the ECEC sector.](#)

Read the [final report from the review into the Inclusion Support Program](#) on our website.

Review into In Home Care: report released

We have released the final report from the review into [In Home Care](#).

In Home Care provides access to ECEC for families that cannot access other ECEC services because they:

- are geographically isolated
- work non-standard hours
- have complex and challenging needs.

In March 2023, we commissioned an independent external review of the program.

The review found the program partially met its objective.

However, the report stated the program was hampered by workforce shortages, affordability, and access issues. It recommended the program is tailored to serve the 3 cohorts it seeks to serve.

The report:

- made 16 findings across 4 themes
- identified 14 key opportunities across 5 focus areas.

The report will inform the:

- [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission inquiry into ECEC prices](#)
- [Productivity Commission inquiry into the ECEC sector.](#)

Read [the final report from the In Home Care review](#) on our website.

Mid-term report on Connected Beginnings now available

We've published the mid-term evaluation of the Connected Beginnings program.

[Connected Beginnings](#) is a grants program that helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life. It is funded by us and the Department of Health and Aged Care.

There are 40 [Connected Beginnings sites](#) around Australia. The target is 50 by 2025.

The mid-term evaluation shows the program is making a positive difference to early educational and wellbeing outcomes for children. The report found Connected Beginnings is helping to:

- increase school readiness



- support children's and mothers' health and wellbeing
- give children increased exposure to culture
- empower parents to support child health development and early learning
- holistically support families.

Read the [mid-term evaluation report](#) on our website.

2023–24 Christmas–New Year period

Have you checked out our information about the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period?

We've got information about Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments, session reports, absences and service closures over the holiday period.

Read about [CCS and the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period](#) on our website.

Support for families experiencing temporary financial hardship

Do you have families experiencing temporary financial hardship at your service? They may be able to get extra help with the cost of ECEC.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) temporary financial hardship for families who:

- are eligible CCS
- are experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an event in the last 6 months
- have a substantially reduced ability to pay child care fees.

Eligible families can get 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight. They'll get the lower of either:

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

The temporary financial hardship subsidy is paid for a maximum of 13 weeks per event.

Families can apply through their [Centrelink online account](#) or by visiting a Centrelink office.

We have information for providers about [ACCS temporary financial hardship](#) on our website.

Families should go to the [Services Australia website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Caught in the act

Two people were sentenced last week for their roles in a Family Day Care scam.

The pair established a Family Day Care service and fraudulently obtained CCS payments by:

- enlisting educators and parents to assist with the fraud
- exaggerating the hours and days when children were in care



- submitting claims for CCS payments for care that did not occur.

They were arrested and charged in 2020 as part of Strike Force Mercury, a joint operation between the Australian Department of Education, NSW Police Force and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). In total, 58 people were charged as a result of the strike force.

In the NSW District Court sentencing in Sydney last Friday:

- both received a term of imprisonment to be served by way of a 2-year Intensive Correction Order
- one was fined \$15,000 and the other \$10,000
- both received a 2-year good behaviour bond
- one was ordered to perform 200 hours of community service and the other 150 hours.

We are committed to ensuring investment in the ECEC sector is used appropriately.

Misappropriation of CCS:

- undermines families' access to quality ECEC
- damages the sector's reputation
- increases costs to the Australian Government and taxpayers.

We use advanced detection techniques and technology to detect child care fraud, including:

- data sharing
- collaborating with police and ACIC
- working with other government agencies such as the Australian Taxation Office and state and territory regulators.

If you think a service or an individual is doing something illegal or fraudulent, you can tell us anonymously by calling 1800 664 231 Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm AEDT. You can also send an email to tipoffline@education.gov.au.

Submitting session reports

You must submit accurate and timely session reports – it's the law.

Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

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

Read more about [submitting session reports](#) on our website.

For families

Family update

Did you know you can connect with Services Australia on social media?

Follow [Family Update](#) on Facebook to ask questions and stay up to date with all things Child Care Subsidy.



From the department

Apply for CCS and National Law approval at same time

We've made it simpler to apply in one place and at the same time.

Since July 2023, you can apply for National Law approval and Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approval in one place and at the same time. You do this through the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#).

Applying for both approvals at the same time will help you apply as early as possible before you start operating.

If you are transferring ownership of a service:

- service approval can be transferred under National Law
- you will need a new CCS approval

You can apply for CCS approval at the same time you apply for a National Law service transfer.

Visit our website to learn how to [add, remove or relocate a service](#).

You'll also find [step-by-step instructions on the approval process](#).

Flexibility extended for IHC educator qualifications

More flexible qualification provisions for In Home Care (IHC) educators in remote and very remote areas will continue until 31 December 2024.

This means IHC educators who don't have the usual qualifications can continue to provide early childhood education and care (ECEC) in these areas. They must still meet certain provisions.

The extension acknowledges workforce shortages. It will also allow us to consider recommendations from the:

- review of IHC
- [Productivity Commission inquiry into early childhood education and care](#)
- [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission child care price inquiry](#).

We will monitor use of the flexible arrangements during 2024.

All other IHC educators must have, or be working towards, a certificate III, diploma or degree in early childhood education, or equivalent.

Section 3.6.1 of the [In Home Care National Guidelines](#) provides details of educator qualifications and provisions. We will update these shortly to reflect the extension.



Join our online network

The Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group is a network of ECEC representatives.

Got a question about administering CCS? Want to learn more about our grants and programs for the sector? [Join our group](#) to connect with us and colleagues.

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

Spotlight on the sector

Case studies showcase ECEC around the nation



Have you seen our case studies?

Our case studies showcase innovative ECEC initiatives across the country.

Pictured above is a scene from Lady Gowrie Tasmania's Battery Point Early Learning Centre. We profiled Lady Gowrie's pre-traineeship program as a successful taster of what it's like to work in the sector.

[Visit our website to read the Lady Gowrie case study and others.](#)

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Collecting gap fees

You must take all reasonable steps to collect gap fees from families electronically. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law (FAL).

All providers should have policies and procedures that set out how you will responsibly administer CCS and comply with FAL. These are known as your governance arrangements.

We have started conducting audits to ensure you are complying with this obligation.

If we contact you about an audit, you must respond promptly.

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations.



See our [guidance on collecting gap fees](#) and find out more about [our audit process](#) on our website.

Enrolment top tips

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS. See our top tips on enrolling children.

Families should make a CCS claim before their child starts at your service.

If a child starts at your service before the family has lodged a claim, or while their claim is being assessed, you should charge full fees. If the family is assessed as eligible, any backdated CCS will be paid directly to the family.

You must use the correct enrolment type.

In most cases, children must be enrolled under a Complying Written Arrangement to get CCS. In very limited circumstances, you may be able to use a Provider Eligible Arrangement (PEA). Find out when you can use a PEA [on our website](#).

You must identify the person who made the CCS claim.

Enrolment notices must identify the parent or carer who made the CCS claim. If you don't identify this person, Services Australia cannot make CCS payments.

Families must confirm the enrolment.

Once you've submitted an enrolment, the family must confirm the details via their [Centrelink online account](#). Services Australia cannot make CCS payments until the enrolment is confirmed.

Read more about [enrolling children](#).

For families

Understanding Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) helps with the cost of approved early childhood education and care.

Find information about CCS on the Services Australia website.

Looking for information in your language? Service Australia has fact sheets in 14 different languages.



From the department

Support for grandparent carers

Do you have grandparent carers at your service? They may be able to get extra help with the cost of early childhood education and care.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) grandparent is for grandparent carers who:

- are eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS)
- get an [income support payment](#)
- are the grandparent of the child
- have 65% or more care of the child
- make the day-to-day decisions about the child's care, welfare and development.

Eligible grandparents can get 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight. They'll get the lower of either:

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

Grandparent carers can apply through their [Centrelink online account](#) or by visiting a Centrelink office.

Grandparent carers who don't get an income support payment won't be eligible for ACCS grandparent. However, they may be eligible for CCS and an [activity test exemption](#).

We have [information for providers about ACCS grandparent](#) on our website.

Grandparents should go to the [Services Australia website](#).

2023–24 Christmas–New Year period

We've published what you need to know about CCS over the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period.

The key things to know are:

- the CCS Helpdesk will close at 12.30 pm AEDT Friday 22 December 2023 and reopen at 9 am AEDT Tuesday 2 January 2024
- you must not submit session reports or claim absences when your service is closed, unless it is a public holiday or during a period of emergency
- you must report shorter hours if you close early on Friday 22 December
- session reports submitted on public holidays may experience short delays in processing or payment
- you must collect the gap fee when claiming absences on a public holiday
- you must tell us if you are closing your service or changing operating hours.

Read more about [CCS and the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period](#) on our website.



Spotlight on the sector

It's Fraud Awareness Week

Fraud Awareness Week encourages business leaders and employees to act to minimise the impact of fraud.

This week is the perfect time to do a quick compliance check-up at your service. Find details of [your obligations under Family Assistance Law](#) on our website and make sure you are complying.

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.

See how else you can get involved at fraudweek.com.

Answer our survey to win \$100

We have commissioned an independent social research company to conduct an anonymous online survey to better understand the needs of the sector.

The ORIMA Research survey is for educators, teachers, directors, managers, and coordinators. Once completed, you can enter a draw to win one of 20 \$100 vouchers.

Questions cover:

- attraction to and retention in the sector
- satisfaction with job, employment conditions and workplace culture
- wellbeing
- perceptions of the sector.

This survey is voluntary and takes no more than 10 minutes to complete. It closes on 1 December.

[Visit the ORIMA website to complete the survey.](#)

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Did you know you must ensure the right people have a working with children check?

Providers must ensure any person required by state or territory law to hold a working with children check (WWCC) has one.

This includes:

- all educators
- some persons with management or control (PMCs)
- some persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service.

Find out who needs a WWCC via the [WWCC regulator in your state or territory](#).



Ensuring the right people have a WWCC is a basic condition of your approval under Family Assistance Law. We may suspend, vary or cancel your approval if you don't follow the rules.

Find out more about [your WWCC obligations](#).

Supporting the workforce

Deadline is Friday for next subsidy payments

Eligible providers have until Friday to apply for the next payments to help them put staff and educators through training.

The [professional development subsidy](#) covers 2 days of training for individual educators and staff.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) can be used to give educators paid leave while they undertake their practicum.

This financial year, those eligible are:

- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations
- First Nations services and educators.

Learn more in our [announcement on the second quarter of payments](#).

We ask that you ensure your applications are complete when submitting.

For families

Find child care

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

On the Starting Blocks website, you can:

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

Visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to start searching.



From the department

We fund 4 new services in remote Australia

We are funding the establishment of 4 new early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in remote communities across 3 states.

The sites will receive funding under the \$29.9 million expansion of our Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) restricted program.

The new services will be run by these First Nations-led organisations:

- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs, NT
- Central Desert Regional Council, Ti Tree, NT
- Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Corporation, Geraldton, WA
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, Kowanyama, Qld.

In April, we announced 4 other new sites in those same states.

In all, the 8 sites will provide ECEC services to more than 300 children per year.

SNAICC, the National Voice for our Children, will be the Community Partner for the sites.

Read the [Minister's media release about the 4 new restricted sites](#).

Learn more about the [CCCF restricted program](#).

Preparing for an emergency

Are you prepared for severe weather events, like bushfires or floods?

Here are some practical ways you can prepare your service for an emergency:

- Go to business.gov.au and follow the steps to create an emergency management plan. A good emergency management plan prepares you and your business for unexpected disruptions. As part of your plan, you should identify the types of disasters you are exposed to and check you have [appropriate insurance](#) in place.
- Familiarise yourself with support available in the event of a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency via [our website](#).
- Make sure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important updates. Check your details via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.
- Make sure to tell us if you close your service due to an emergency. You can do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- [Join our Facebook group](#) and turn on post notifications to get the latest alerts.

Reminder: changes to ACCS child wellbeing

Last month we made changes to streamline access to Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing. We also published new guidance to help you administer the subsidy.



The changes included:

- consolidating service delivery within Services Australia
- expanding the exceptional circumstances for extended backdating.

Read [our announcement](#) to learn more about these changes.

Go to the updated [ACCS child wellbeing guidance](#) on our website.

Spotlight on the sector

More services meeting National Quality Standard

The latest snapshot from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) shows 90% of services are rated as Meeting National Quality Standards (NQS) or above.

The 3rd quarter 2023 snapshot shows an improvement from 88% for the same quarter last year.

Almost a quarter (24%) of services were rated as Exceeding NQS or above.

The number of approved services increased 2% from Q3 2022.

The quarterly snapshots provide an overview of the sector, including the progress and results of quality assessment and ratings.

Read the [latest NQF snapshot](#) on ACECQA's website.

Become an AERO Learning Partner

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) is inviting ECEC services to join its 2024 Learning Partner project.

The project aims to improve the implementation of the evidence-based practice of assessment for learning in ECEC.

AERO is Australia's independent education evidence body. It's dedicated to achieving excellence and equity in educational outcomes for all children and young people.

AERO is interested in Learning Partners who are:

- a centre director, educational leader or education support officer
- based in Canberra, Hobart or Sydney
- ready to take part in professional learning sessions and activities to enhance teaching practices, and
- have achieved a recent Meeting NQS rating.

Learning Partners get to:

- acquire knowledge and strategies for assessment for learning
- collaborate with an AERO consultant
- network with peers



- receive funding for backfill
- add value to their service's Quality Improvement Plan
- contribute to the sector.

[Learn more and register to be a 2024 Learning Partner.](#)

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Are your contact details up to date?

It's important to keep your contact details up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information.

Update your details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Are you reporting third-party payments correctly?

There are rules you must follow when a third party contributes to a family's early childhood education and care fees. We may take compliance action if you don't report fee information correctly.

Generally, when a third party contributes to a family's child care fees, you must deduct the contribution from the total session fee.

The family's CCS rate will then be applied to the reduced session fee. This is because families are only entitled to CCS in relation to the amount you actually charge them.

There are exceptions to this rule, including contributions made from a state or territory government for a child attending a preschool program at a Centre Based Day Care service.

Visit our website to [check your understanding of third-party payments](#).

Supporting the workforce

Deadline near for next professional development payments

Eligible providers have just over a week to apply for the next payments to help them put staff and educators through training.

Applications close on Friday 17 November for payments to be made in early December.

The [professional development subsidy](#) covers 2 days of training for individual educators and staff.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) can be used to give educators paid leave while they undertake their practicum.

Please ensure your applications are complete when you submit.

This financial year, those eligible are:

- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations
- First Nations services and educators.



Learn more in our [announcement on the next payments](#).

Open for comment: ECEC capacity study

Jobs and Skills Australia is undertaking a capacity study on the workforce needs of the sector.

You're invited to share feedback on the [draft terms of reference](#) until 5 pm (AEDT) Friday 10 November 2023.

Feel strongly about training, attracting, and retaining ECEC staff? Visit the Jobs and Skills Australia website [to share your thoughts](#).

For families

Child Care Subsidy balancing

Services Australia is balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2022–23 financial year.

You must confirm your income so Services Australia can balance your CCS.

You can confirm your income by:

- lodging your tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), or
- telling Services Australia you don't need to lodge a tax return, even if you've already told the ATO.

Once Services Australia has balanced your CCS, they will send you an outcome.

Find out more about [CCS balancing](#) on the Services Australia website.



From the department

2023–24 Christmas–New Year period

As we approach the end of the year, it's a good time to familiarise yourself with how the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) works over the Christmas–New Year period.

We've published what you need to know about CCS over the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period on our website.

The key things to know are:

- the CCS Helpdesk will close at 12.30 pm AEDT Friday 22 December 2023 and reopen at 9 am AEDT Tuesday 2 January 2024
- you must not submit session reports or claim absences when your service is closed, unless it is a public holiday or during a period of emergency
- you must report shorter hours if you close early on Friday 22 December
- session reports submitted on public holidays may experience short delays in processing or payment
- you must collect the gap fee when claiming absences on a public holiday
- you must tell us if you are closing your service or changing operating hours.

Read more about [CCS and the 2023–24 Christmas–New Year period](#).

ACCS child wellbeing and your role

Providers play an important role in connecting families to Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing.

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

Your role includes:

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

We have [new guidance on our website](#) to help you navigate the process.

We recommend all providers familiarise themselves with this information. You can also let us know what you think via the feedback buttons at the bottom of each page.

Plus, read [our announcement](#) to learn about recent changes to the subsidy.



Join the network

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is home to a network of over 7,600 early childhood education and care representatives.

Our Facebook group is a space to:

- keep up to date with the department's policies and programs
- get updates in times of emergency
- share information directly from the group to your own page
- connect with others in the sector.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to [join the group](#)

Spotlight on the sector

Connected Beginnings: strengthening local communities

[Connected Beginnings](#) is an Australian Government grants program that helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life.

There are 40 [Connected Beginnings sites across Australia](#), with 50 to be established by 2025.

[Visit our website](#) to read how communities like Ngroo Education Aboriginal Corporation, in western Sydney are leading the way.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Persons with management or control

Do you know who is considered a person with management or control (PMC) at your organisation?

We have detailed guidance about [who is considered a PMC](#) on our website.

We encourage you to check this information and ensure to identify all PMCs at your organisation in the Child Care Subsidy System. You must also keep their contact details up to date.

Supporting the workforce

Apply for next professional development payments

Eligible providers have until Friday 17 November to apply for our next payments to help them put staff and educators through training.

The [professional development subsidy](#) covers 2 days of training for individual educators and staff.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) can be used to give educators paid leave while they undertake their practicum.

This financial year, those eligible are:



- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations
- First Nations services and educators.

When applying you must provide:

- your customer reference number – which can be found in the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software
- signed authorisation from a [PMC](#).

Eligible providers should have received information via DocuSign in July.

If you did not receive this or have other questions, email us at ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au.

There will continue to be subsidy payments up until and including the 2026–27 financial year.

Learn more in our [announcement on the next payments](#).

For families

36 hours of CCS for First Nations children

Did you know you can get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) per fortnight for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your care, regardless of the amount of recognised activity you do?

If you care for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child and would like to get at least 36 hours of CCS, you'll need to call Services Australia on 136 150. It's voluntary to call.

You may get more than 36 hours of CCS per fortnight based on your circumstances and the amount of recognised activity you do.

Your CCS rate will continue to be based on your income. You must still pay the gap fee.

Find out more on the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

We're setting up 47 services in areas of limited supply

We have notified 28 providers we will fund them to establish 13 new Centre Based Day Care services and 34 Family Day Care premises in areas of limited supply.

We are giving providers \$16 million this financial year and next under the Community Child Care Fund's (CCCF) limited supply grant for the 47 services.

The new services will be in 38 communities across Australia:

- in areas experiencing disadvantage in regional and remote areas
- where there are no or limited similar services.

A service can receive a maximum of \$900,000 over the 2 years:

- \$600,000 for establishment and sustainability support
- \$300,000 for capital support.

Read the list of new services on the [CCCF limited supply grant webpage](#).

Read the [Minister's media release on the announcement of the limited supply grants](#).

Got a suggestion? Constructive feedback? Compliment?

Our survey is still open – it's your opportunity to tell us what you think about our communications.

Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey so far. One of the things you have told us is that the different roles of the Federal and state and territory education departments can be confusing.

In short, we are the Australian Government Department of Education. We're responsible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the legislation that underpins it, known as Family Assistance Law (FAL).

Regulatory authorities administer the National Quality Framework (NQF) in each state and territory. They are usually part of your state or territory's education department. Find your regulatory authority via [ACECQA's website](#).

Learn more about [how early childhood education and care works in Australia](#) on our website.

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

Gap fee audits

Providers must take all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically. We have started conducting audits to ensure providers are complying with this obligation.

We conduct audits by either:

- visiting your service and conducting a face-to-face audit, or
- requesting information through a section 158 notice.



The type of information we may request during an audit includes:

- statements of entitlements
- Complying Written Arrangements
- provider, service or educator bank statements
- explanations about fee discrepancies, such as payment plans or outstanding fees
- evidence of the steps you've taken where a gap fee has not been paid, or has not been paid electronically
- policies, procedures or other documents that show how your service administers CCS and complies with FAL.

If we contact you about an audit, you must respond promptly.

Find out more about our [audit process](#) and see our [guidance on collecting gap fees](#) on our website.

Understanding ACCS child wellbeing

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

Recently, we made changes to streamline access to ACCS child wellbeing. The changes included:

- consolidating service delivery within Services Australia
- expanding the exceptional circumstances for extended backdating.

Read [our announcement](#) to learn more about the changes.

Providers play an important role in connecting families to ACCS child wellbeing. Unlike other subsidies, providers apply on behalf of a family. Families cannot apply.

We've updated the information on our website to help guide you through the process of administering ACCS child wellbeing. We recommend all providers familiarise themselves with this information.

Read more about [ACCS child wellbeing](#) on our website.



Spotlight on the sector

Celebrating the right to enjoy childhood



Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, is encouraging us all to take part in Children's Week 2023.

'Please encourage all children you know to relax, play and get involved in the things they enjoy ... sound advice for our grown-ups too.'

See Dr Aly's video message above.

Visit the [Children's Week website](#) to explore ways you can take part.

ACCC price inquiry: submissions close 29 October

Submissions to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) inquiry into early childhood education and care prices close on 29 October.

The ACCC is inviting responses to the draft findings and recommendations of its second interim report via [its website](#).

Read the [ACCC report](#).

Read the [Ministers' media release following the release of the report](#). The ACCC will provide its final report to the government by 31 December 2023.



Facts from Family Assistance Law

Submitting session reports

You must submit accurate and timely session reports – it's the law.

Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

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

Read more about [submitting session reports](#) on our website.

Avoiding an overpayment

Sometimes, you may receive more CCS than you're entitled to. This is known as an overpayment.

Overpayments generally occur if you withdraw or change a session report, such as amending to record fewer hours of care.

If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to pay back the difference. This is called offsetting. You can see if offsetting has occurred in your payment advice in the Child Care Subsidy System.

The best way to avoid an overpayment is to submit accurate and timely session reports.

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

Supporting the workforce

Apply now for professional development subsidies

Eligible providers can still apply for payments in this second quarter of the new professional development subsidies to help them get staff and educators through training.

Completed applications for the next payment period of the professional development and paid practicum subsidies must be received by Friday 17 November. Once approved, payments will be made in early December.

The [professional development subsidy](#) covers 2 days of training, up to 15.2 hours.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) can be used to give educators paid leave while they undertake their practicum.

This financial year, those eligible are:

- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations
- First Nations services and educators.

About \$9.7 million in subsidies was distributed in the first quarter of payments. More than 1,200 services received payments to support more than 15,000 educators.

If you think your service might be eligible, please [read the subsidy guidelines](#).

When applying you must provide:



- the customer reference number for your service – which can be found in the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software
- signed authorisation from a [person with management or control](#).

There will continue to be subsidy payments up until and including the 2026–27 financial year.

Eligible providers should have received information via DocuSign in July. If you did not receive this or have questions, email us at ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au.

For families

Got a question about Child Care Subsidy?

You can connect with Services Australia on Facebook.

Follow the [Family Update page](#) to stay up to date with all things Child Care Subsidy.



From the department

Changes to Additional Child Care Subsidy child wellbeing

We're streamlining access to Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing.

ACCS child wellbeing provides extra help with the cost of early childhood education and care. It's for families who care for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect. Unlike other subsidies, providers apply on behalf of a family.

We have:

- consolidated service delivery within Services Australia
- expanded the exceptional circumstances for extended backdating of the subsidy

These changes will reduce barriers to early childhood education and care for vulnerable children and families.

All applications will be processed by Services Australia

All ACCS child wellbeing applications lodged from 16 October 2023 will be processed by Services Australia. Previously, applications for extended backdating were managed by the department.

This change will:

- streamline the assessment of applications
- reduce the risk of potential gaps in entitlements
- provide a single point of contact for providers about application outcomes and reviews.

The process to apply for the subsidy has not changed.

New exceptional circumstances

There are 3 new exceptional circumstances where you can apply for extended backdating.

These are:

- children in formal foster care
- families experiencing homelessness
- families affected by the harmful use of alcohol or drugs.

This change will:

- allow more time to collect evidence for families in these circumstances
- reduce the risk of children falling through the gaps.

You must provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance in your application.

Understanding ACCS child wellbeing

We've updated the information on our website to help you better understand ACCS child wellbeing.



We have new guidance about:

- identifying a child at risk
- establishing eligibility
- applying for the subsidy
- reporting obligations.

Read more about [ACCS child wellbeing](#) on our website.

Feedback from our communication survey

Our 3-minute communication survey is still open.

Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey so far. We're already taking your feedback on board.

One of the things you have told us is **that you'd like more information about absences at the start or end of an enrolment.**

Generally, absences should occur between a child's first and last physical attendance at your service. We don't typically pay Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for absences that occur outside this period.

There are some circumstances where families can get CCS if an absence occurs in the 7 days before a child's first, or after their last, attendance at your service. These are:

- any of the [additional absence reasons](#)
- the service has changed ownership
- the child's usual service is closed and the child attends a different service under the same provider
- a family tragedy has occurred
- the enrolment ceased incorrectly
- following a [period of emergency](#).

You can read more about absences on our website.

Meantime, if you haven't already, we'd love you to [complete our 3-minute survey](#). You are welcome to share the survey with colleagues. We look forward to hearing more of your insights and suggestions.



Spotlight on the sector

Case study: building stronger First Nations communities



Connected Beginnings is an Australian Government program that aims to ensure children are healthy and ready to thrive at school by the age of 5. It's a community-led and owned Closing the Gap measure. It brings together First Nations community members and organisations to find local solutions collectively.

Krystle Daley (pictured), a proud Wiradjuri woman, is the executive director of Ngroo Education Aboriginal Corporation, in western Sydney. She coordinates the Connected Beginnings partnerships across Doonside and Mt Druitt.

'We went out to listen to our mob and get feedback where gaps are, and how we can deliver a service for our people,' Krystle said.

'Families come along to the playgroup and they get a preview of what preschool is like. They feel comfortable and they feel welcome. Last year, we went in one month from 4 families to 15 after the word got out. Now we have 20 families that come along.'

[Read our case study](#) on how communities like Krystle's are leading change through Connected Beginnings.

Spotlight on infant mental health

Be You will run an interactive online session for early learning educators next week.

Tune in on Thursday 26 October and explore healthy social and emotional development of infants. The session will cover bonding before birth and family partnerships.

Register for the session on the [Be You website](#).

Be You is a national mental health and wellbeing initiative for learning communities.



Facts from Family Assistance Law

Do you know who needs a working with children check?

Broadly, anyone who has contact with children at an early childhood education and care service must have a current working with children check (WWCC).

This will usually include:

- all educators
- persons with management or control (PMCs)
- persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service.

Each state and territory has different requirements. In some jurisdictions, PMCs must have a WWCC even if they do not have direct contact with children.

Find out who needs a WWCC and apply for one via the [WWCC regulator in your state or territory](#).

Find out more about [your WWCC obligations](#).

For families

Do you have more than one child in care?

If you have more than one child aged 5 or under in care, you may get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for your second child and younger children.

You can get a higher subsidy for one or more of your children if all of these apply:

- you get or will be eligible for CCS
- your family's combined income is under \$362,408
- your family has more than one CCS eligible child aged 5 or under.

Services Australia will automatically work out if you're eligible. If you are, they'll automatically apply a higher subsidy to any eligible children in your family.

If your Centrelink online account is linked to myGov, you can check your CCS percentage online.

Find out more about how your number of children in care can affect your CCS on the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

Period of emergency declared in parts of Victoria

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency for parts of Victoria affected by flooding.

The period of emergency applies in Sale, East Sale, Maffra, Heyfield and Boisdale in the Shire of Wellington. It applies from 5 to 6 October 2023.

We've contacted providers in the affected areas with more information. Please check your provider-level email address listed in the Child Care Subsidy System for details.

Visit our website to learn more about [support during a period of emergency](#).

Are you prepared for an emergency?

Now is the time to prepare your service for an emergency or natural disaster.

Having a plan in place can ensure the safety of children and staff and reduce damage to property. Below are some practical ways you can plan and prepare.

Prepare your business

[Business.gov.au](#) has information and resources to help you:

- prepare your business for an emergency
- develop an emergency management plan
- find out what to do and who to contact in an emergency
- keep your business running during tough times.

Insurance can help your business get back on its feet if things go wrong. You can insure against disasters and for business disruption – to cover your losses during the recovery period.

It is a good idea to identify the types of disasters you are exposed to and the likelihood of these occurring, and make sure you have an appropriate level of insurance in place.

Learn more about [business insurance](#).

Understand emergency support

It is also a good idea to familiarise yourself with the support we provide to services and families in the event of a CCS period of emergency.

Visit [our website](#) to find out:

- what constitutes a period of emergency
- when and how we declare a period of emergency
- support available during and after a period of emergency.



Update your contact details

We let providers know when a period of emergency is declared in their region. We use the email addresses listed in the Child Care Subsidy System.

Check your details are up to date, via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software, so you don't miss important updates.

You can also [subscribe to our newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#) for the latest alerts.

If you close your service due to an emergency, you must tell us. You can do this via the PEP or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

3-minute communication survey open

Do you use our website? Read this weekly newsletter? Interact with our Facebook group? Watch our videos?

We want to hear from you!

We're running a survey so you can tell us what you think about our communication activities.

We craft our communications to help you better understand the Australian Government's early childhood education and 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.

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

[Complete our communications survey now.](#)

Reminder: 2022–23 CCS balancing

Services Australia is balancing CCS for the 2022–23 financial year.

Families who get CCS must confirm their income with Services Australia so their payments can be balanced.

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return, even if they've already told the ATO.

Once Services Australia has balanced a family's CCS, they will send them an outcome.

You may wish to display a [balancing basics poster](#) at your service.

We have more information for providers [on our website](#). Please direct families with questions to the [Services Australia website](#).

Spotlight on the sector

ACCC price inquiry report: call for submissions

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is inviting submissions to its inquiry into early childhood education and care prices following the release of the second interim report.



You can make a submission in response to the draft findings and recommendations via the [ACCC website](#) until 29 October.

Read the [ACCC report](#).

Read the [Ministers' media release following the release of the report](#).

The ACCC will provide its final report to the government by 31 December 2023.

Another successful ECA national conference



We were proud to again sponsor the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) national conference held last week in Adelaide.

ECA is a peak early childhood advocacy organisation. The 4-day event was an opportunity for educators from across Australia to hear about the latest research and developments in the sector.

We sponsored 5 educators so they could attend the event in-person and 3 to attend online. Pictured above are Tristan Reed, representative from the Department of Education, and scholarship recipients Isabella Thompson from Kentish Lifelong Learning and Care Inc, Andra Webb from Goldfields Child Care Centre, Barbara Sorensen from Kentish Lifelong Learning and Care Inc, Vicki Davis from Thrive Group, and Amy Cosgrove from Valla preschool.

Minister for Early Childhood Education The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP also [addressed the conference](#) on the final day.

Children's Week is nearly here

We encourage you to join thousands of children and families across the country to celebrate National Children's Week from 21 to 29 October.

You can take part by:

- organising, joining, or registering for [an event](#) near you
- [displaying the poster](#) at your service
- sharing the hashtag #ChildrensWeek2023 on social media.

Visit the [Children's Week website](#) to learn more.



Facts from Family Assistance Law

Collecting gap fees

You must take all reasonable steps to collect gap fees from families electronically. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law (FAL).

All providers should have policies and procedures that set out how you will responsibly administer CCS and comply with FAL. These are known as your governance arrangements.

We have information on our website about the types of governance arrangements that demonstrate you are taking all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically.

We regularly conduct audits to ensure you are complying with this obligation.

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations. Compliance action could include:

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

Read our [guidance about collecting gap fees](#) and ensure you're complying.

For families

36 hours of Child Care Subsidy for First Nations children

Did you know you can get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) per fortnight for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your care, regardless of the amount of recognised activity you do?

If you care for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child and would like to get at least 36 hours of CCS, you'll need to call Services Australia on [the Centrelink families line](#). It is voluntary to do this.

You may get more than 36 hours of CCS per fortnight based on your circumstances and the amount of recognised activity you do.

Your CCS rate will continue to be based on your income. You must still pay the gap fee.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

New nation-wide tool for preschool teachers and educators to be trialled in 2025

The Australian Government and states and territories last Thursday jointly announced a national approach to supporting the development needs of preschool children.

A new [Preschool Outcomes Measure](#) will be developed and trialled nationally in 2025. It will help educators better understand children's early learning and development in:

- oral language and literacy
- executive function.

The Preschool Outcomes Measure will support and streamline teachers' and educators' existing teaching practices. It will align with existing frameworks including:

- [National Quality Standard](#)
- [Early Years Learning Framework V2.](#)

The Preschool Outcomes Measure will provide a nationally consistent framework for teachers and educators to:

- understand a child's strengths and capabilities
- plan the next steps in a child's learning and development
- meet National Law requirements for assessing and documenting children's learning
- minimise workload through streamlined processes.

The tool will be developed throughout 2024 in consultation with teachers, educators and education experts. A national trial will take place in selected services in 2025.

The Preschool Outcomes Measure is a key reform under the [Preschool Reform Agreement](#). It's a joint initiative of the Australian and state and territory governments.

Read the [joint media release from federal, state and territory ministers about the Preschool Outcomes Measure](#).

To find out more about the tool, consultation process and trial visit [our website](#).

Have your say on our communications

Every year around this time we ask you to tell us what you think of our communication activities.

We craft our communications to help you better understand the Australian Government's early childhood education and 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.

We want feedback on what you think of our:

- website
- this weekly newsletter



- explainer videos
- Facebook group.

We read the survey results and comments closely and respond to feedback to make incremental improvements to our communications. This survey is anonymous. We don't collect any personal data.

[Complete the survey and tell us what you think.](#)

How to become an approved provider

You must be approved to operate an early childhood education and care service to administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) in Australia.

You must be approved by both:

- the Australian Government
- your state or territory government.

You can now apply for both approvals in one place – the National Quality Agenda IT System.

We recommend applying as early as possible before you start operating.

CCS approval is not automatic and should not be assumed. We have a rigorous assessment process to ensure CCS is administered correctly, by responsible and law-abiding people.

We can only assess CCS applications that include all the mandatory information and evidence.

We have [step-by-step guidance on the process](#) on our website. If you're planning on applying, please read this information carefully.

You can also [join our Facebook group](#) to get information and help before you're approved.

Spotlight on the sector

ACCC price inquiry's second interim report: submissions invited

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is inviting submissions following the release of the second interim report from its inquiry into early childhood education and care (ECEC) prices.

The [report](#) includes draft findings and recommendations that focus on the:

- costs of providing child care services
- nature of competition in child care markets
- profitability and viability of the sector
- effectiveness of Australia's existing price regulation mechanisms in aiding affordability of childcare.

The ACCC is inviting submissions on the draft findings and recommendations via the [ACCC website](#) until 29 October.

In October 2022, Treasurer, the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers, [directed the ACCC](#) to hold an inquiry into ECEC prices.

The ACCC will provide its final report to the government by 31 December 2023.



Download resources on immunisation

The Department of Health has produced free resources to promote the importance of childhood immunisation among parents and carers.

For the best protection against preventable diseases, such as measles and whooping cough, it's important children receive their free routine vaccines:

- in line with the [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#)
- on time, every time.

You can download and share these resources in your service:

- [childhood vaccines consumer brochure](#)
- [poster](#)
- [videos and animations](#).

Children must meet immunisation requirements Child Care Subsidy.

Visit the [Department of Health website](#) to learn more about routine childhood immunisation.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Persons with management or control obligations

Persons with management or control of the provider (PMCs) have obligations and responsibilities.

We have a [comprehensive list of PMC responsibilities, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

If you are not complying with your responsibilities you risk:

- having your approval cancelled, varied or suspended
- losing approval to run a service
- having up to 3 weeks of CCS suspended.

Check [the list on our website](#) and make sure you're following the rules to avoid compliance action.

We publish certain sanctions on our [Enforcement action register](#).

What to do if you get an infringement notice

We issue infringements to providers when we reasonably believe a provider has not followed the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL).

Most providers comply with the law and do the right thing. However, where certain rules are not being followed, we use infringement notices to help change provider behaviour.

An infringement notice includes a fine and can be expensive.

We send infringements by email and by post. If you get an infringement, you have 28 days to pay the fine, seek an extension time to pay the fine or request withdrawal.



We have more information about [what to do if you get an infringement](#) on our website.

The best way to avoid an infringement is to be aware of and comply with **all** of [your obligations under FAL](#).

For families

ACCC survey: final call to CALD parents, guardians

Parents and guardians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families have until Sunday to answer a survey for the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's child care price inquiry.

The survey is available in:

- [Arabic](#)
- [Simplified Chinese](#)
- [Traditional Chinese](#)
- [Korean](#)
- [Vietnamese](#).

We ask that services encourage families from these communities to have their say.

All responses are anonymous.



From the department

Financial reporting deadline for large providers is Sunday

Large providers must report financial information to the department. The deadline for large providers who report on the financial year is this Sunday.

Complete the [2022–23 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by 1 October. Please ensure to include financial statements and information as outlined in the Important Information tab.

If you report on a calendar year your deadline will fall on 1 April 2024. We'll provide more information about what you need to do closer to the deadline.

This obligation only applies to providers who operate, or share operation of, 25 or more services. If you're not sure whether these obligations apply to you, please email ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au. Learn more about the financial reporting obligations [for large providers](#) on our website.

CCS Helpdesk closed on Monday 2 October

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed on Monday 2 October because of a public holiday in some states and territories.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEDT on Tuesday 3 October.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime [by email](#) and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Spotlight on the sector

Latest Child Care Subsidy released

We've published data about the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the March and June 2023 quarters.

Each quarter we issue a summary report about CCS-approved care in Australia. The report includes data on child care usage, services, fees and subsidies in Australia.

Key findings from the March quarter 2023 include:

- 1,419,150 children from 995,350 families used CCS-approved care
- 14,382 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 26.7 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$11.45
- the Australian Government paid \$2.69 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [March quarter 2023 report](#).



Key findings from the June quarter 2023 include:

- 1,412,320 children from 993,930 families used CCS-approved care
- 14,510 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 26.2 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$11.55
- the Australian Government paid \$2.90 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [June quarter 2023 report](#)

About Family Assistance Law

Are your contact details up to date?

It's important to keep your contact details up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

If your contact details are not correct:

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

Update your details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

For families

Survey callout to CALD parents, guardians

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is asking parents and guardians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families to answer a survey for its [child care price inquiry](#).

The survey closes on Sunday 8 October. It is available in:

- [Arabic](#)
- [Simplified Chinese](#)
- [Traditional Chinese](#)
- [Korean](#)
- [Vietnamese](#).

All responses are anonymous.



From the department

Financial reporting deadline for large providers approaching

The financial reporting deadline for some large providers is approaching.

Large providers must report financial information, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements, to the department each year. This obligation started on 1 July this year.

The reporting deadline depends on when you do your financial reporting.

If you do your financial reporting on the financial year, the deadline is on 1 October 2023.

Complete the [2022–23 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by the deadline.

Please ensure to include financial statements and information as outlined in the important information tab.

If you report on a calendar year your deadline will fall on 1 April 2024. We'll provide more information about what you need to do closer to the deadline.

This obligation only applies to providers who operate, or share operation of, 25 or more services. If you're not sure whether these obligations apply to you, please email ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au.

Learn more about the [financial reporting obligations for large providers](#) on our website.

Spotlight on the sector

Get ready for Children's Week

Now is the time to get ready for Children's Week, which is marked from 21 to 29 October.

Children's Week celebrates the right of children to enjoy childhood. Events during the week give children the chance to demonstrate their talents and achievements.

The theme for 2023 is based on Article 31 from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: 'Children have the right to relax, play and take part in activities they enjoy'.

You can take part by:

- organising, joining, or registering for [an event](#) near you
- [displaying the poster](#) at your service
- sharing the hashtag #ChildrensWeek2023 on social media.



Workforce: thinking differently



The story of Tasmanian educator Lauren, pictured, is an example of a provider creatively addressing workforce challenges.

Lauren took part in a pre-traineeship program with Lady Gowrie Tasmania. The six-week program gave her a taste of life at a service. She then continued with training and gained a full-time role with the service.

Read about the journey of some aspiring educators in [our case study on Lady Gowrie's pre-traineeship program](#).

Share your story of how you're doing things differently on [our Facebook group for Australian Child Care Providers and Services](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Submit session reports on time

You must submit accurate and timely session reports – it's the law.

Services Australia use session reports to calculate and process Child Care Subsidy payments.

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

Read more about [submitting session reports](#) on our website.



For families

CALD families: ACCC wants your feedback

We remind parents and guardians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is looking to survey them for its child care price inquiry.

The survey is available in:

- Arabic
- Simplified Chinese
- Traditional Chinese
- Korean
- Vietnamese.

The survey closes at 11:59 pm AEDT on Sunday 8 October.

All responses are anonymous.

If you have questions about the survey email ChildcareInquiryTaskforce@acc.gov.au.



From the department

Reminder: the activity test has changed

Families can now get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. This is regardless of their activity level.

Help families at your service understand how, by:

- sharing with families this [video](#)
- displaying and distributing at your service this [flyer](#) and [blog](#)
- sharing on your social media channels this [tile](#)
- directing families with questions to the [Services Australia website](#).

Join the conversation

In the last month, we've had lots of new members join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#).

Our Facebook group is a space to:

- keep up to date with the department's policies and programs
- get updates in times of emergency
- share information directly from the group to your own page
- connect with others in the sector.

Members have recently asked questions on:

- applying for our professional development subsidies
- allowable absences
- and much more.

To learn, explore, and connect with us and others in the sector, [join our Facebook group](#).

Spotlight on the sector

Resources to help children with their development

New resources are available for educators to help them with children's development

The resources help educators to:

- start conversations with families [about children with developmental concerns](#)
- support children with a [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\) plan](#)
- provide information to families on [how to get help through an early childhood partner](#).



The National Disability Insurance Agency worked with us, the Department of Social Services, and the National Indigenous Australians Agency on the resources. They were tested with the sector.

Educators are an important part of the team that provides holistic support for children with developmental concerns and delay, and disability.

We encourage you to share the resources with your educators and families.

The resources are a commitment under the [Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan](#). They are on [the Department of Social Services website](#).

A conversation could change a life

Tomorrow is R U OK? Day, a national day of action to remind everyone that every day is the day to ask, 'are you OK?' and support those struggling with life's ups and downs.

Find resources for [educators on the R U OK? Day website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Are your contact details up to date?

It's really important to keep your contact details up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

If your contact details are not correct:

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

Update your details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Are you reporting fees correctly?

There are rules you must follow when a third party contributes to a family's fees. Make sure you're reporting fees correctly to avoid compliance action.

Generally, when a third party contributes to a family's child care fees, you must deduct the contribution from the total session fee.

The family's CCS rate will then be applied to the reduced session fee. This is because families are only entitled to CCS in relation to the amount they are liable to pay.

There are exceptions to this rule in limited circumstances. These circumstances are known as prescribed third-party payments. We list all [prescribed third-party payments](#) on our website.

Reporting the correct fee information is a requirement under Family Assistance Law. We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations.

Find examples about [how to report different types of third-party payments](#) on our website.



Supporting the workforce

Payment of new subsidies start this month

The first providers granted the new professional development subsidies will receive their money this month.

Eligible providers who met the first quarter deadline will receive payment via the Child Care Subsidy System by 30 September.

The subsidies are the:

- [professional development subsidy](#), which supports qualified early childhood educators to undertake additional training and
- [paid practicum subsidy](#), which supports early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.

This financial year, eligible providers are those with:

- First Nations services and educators
- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations.

Eligible providers should have received information from us via DocuSign in July.

Applications must be received by 17 November 2023 for the next quarterly payment period.

The subsidies are available up until and including the 2026–27 financial year.

Email ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au with any questions about eligibility for the subsidies or advice regarding your application.

If you think your service might be eligible, please [read the subsidy guidelines](#).

Fee-free TAFE for aspiring educators

Do you have someone in your community who would make a great educator? Did you know they could be eligible for fee-free TAFE training to become qualified?

More than 12,500 people around Australia have enrolled in early childhood education and care (ECEC) courses at no cost since January via Fee-free TAFE. This has included the Certificate III in ECEC.

Fee-free TAFE is available in all states and territories. Visit [Your Career](#) to check on eligibility.

For families

Child Care Subsidy withholding

Did you know Services Australia withholds 5% of your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) until the end of the financial year?

This is to reduce the likelihood of you getting an overpayment. An overpayment could result in a debt after the end of financial year when your CCS is balanced.



You can vary your withholding amount to suit your circumstances, up to twice a year, online. Find out how on the [Services Australia website](#).

ACCC inquiry wants to hear from CALD parents, guardians

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is asking parents and guardians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families to have their say in its child care price inquiry.

This survey will help the ACCC understand:

- the preferences of CALD families when considering and accessing different types of early childhood education and care services
- the challenges faced when looking for and using ECEC services.

The survey is available in:

- [Arabic](#)
- [Simplified Chinese](#)
- [Traditional Chinese](#)
- [Korean](#)
- [Vietnamese](#).

The survey closes at 11:59 pm AEDT on Sunday 8 October.

All responses are anonymous.

If you have questions about the survey email ChildcareInquiryTaskforce@acc.gov.au.



From the department

Know your obligations: working with children checks

All providers have obligations regarding working with children checks (WWCCs) under both state and territory law, and Family Assistance Law. There are serious consequences if you fail to meet your obligations.

Your obligations fall under 3 categories.

Getting the check

You must ensure any person required by state or territory law to hold a WWCC has one. This includes:

- all educators
- some persons with management or control (PMCs) and persons responsible at the service.

Each state and territory has different requirements about who must have a WWCC. Find out who needs a WWCC and apply for one via the [WWCC regulator in your state or territory](#).

Reporting the check

In some cases, getting the check is not all that's required. You must also report some checks in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS).

You must do this for:

- all Family Day Care (FDC) educators
- all In Home Care (IHC) educators
- any PMCs and persons responsible at the service that are required to have a WWCC, across all care types.

For these people, you must report new checks within 7 days and report changes to existing checks within 24 hours.

Recording the check

You must keep records of all checks. You must be able to provide these to us on request.

Consequences

Failure to get a check, report a check, or record a check when required is a serious breach of the law.

Plus, sessions of care are only eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if you've complied with your WWCC obligations.

If you fail to comply, we may:

- deny your application for CCS approval
- raise a provider debt
- issue an infringement
- take civil penalty action
- place conditions on your approval
- suspend, vary or cancel your approval.



For action

We have detailed [information about your WWCC obligations](#) on our website. Please review this information carefully.

After reviewing this information, we encourage you to:

- check who needs a WWCC in your organisation and make sure they have one
- check you have reported WWCCs in the CCSS for all required people
- check you have up to date records of all WWCCs.

We're also contacting some FDC and IHC providers this week. If you receive a letter from the department, you must act urgently to avoid compliance action.

Spotlight on the sector

Thank you, early childhood educators



Today, on Early Childhood Educators' Day, we say a huge thank you to early childhood educators for their important role supporting children's wellbeing, learning and development in the early years.

Early Childhood Educators' Day is an opportunity for employers, children, families and the community to express gratitude and appreciation for the hard work and significant impact that educators have on children's lives.

We encourage all providers to get involved on this important day.

Find resources and ideas to get involved at your service on the [Early Childhood Educators' Day website](#). We'd love to see what activities your service got up to today. Let us know in the comments of our [Facebook post](#).

Share photos of your celebrations on your channels using the hashtags #Proud2BeAnECE and #EarlyChildhoodEducatorsDay.

Share stories this Indigenous Literacy Day

Today is also Indigenous Literacy Day, a day to celebrate the stories, cultures and languages of First Nations peoples.

Take part in the [online event](#) and [access this free database](#) for educators with children's books by and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



Facts from Family Assistance Law

Who is a person with management or control?

Do you know who is considered a PMC at your organisation? Make sure to identify all PMCs and keep their details up to date in the CCSS.

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

- 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.

Broadly, PMCs can be:

- 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.

Read more about [PMCs](#) and check this table for [PMCs in different organisation types](#).

Check you have identified all PMCs in the [CCSS](#) and make sure their details are up to date.

Supporting the workforce

Join an industry advisory committee

[HumanAbility](#), the new Jobs and Skills Council for the early childhood education and care sector, and other service industries, is looking for people to take part in its advisory committees.

Do you want to share your thoughts on addressing skills and workforce challenges in the sector? [Express your interest](#) in joining an advisory committee.



Explore other ways to get involved and keep up to date by registering your interest with [HumanAbility](#)

For families

Family update

Did you know you can connect with Services Australia on social media?

[Follow the Family Update page](#) on Facebook to ask questions and stay up to date with all things Child Care Subsidy.



From the department

Another 6 Connected Beginnings sites to be set up

Another 6 new Connected Beginnings sites will be established to help thousands more First Nations children get ready for school.

The sites, 5 in Queensland and 1 in New South Wales, are:

- Hervey Bay, Qld
- Cairns, Qld
- Bundaberg, Qld
- Rockhampton, Qld
- Broken Hill, NSW.

[Connected Beginnings](#) is an Australian Government grants program and [Closing the Gap measure](#).

The new locations are expected to support up to 4,500 children get prepared for school.

The announcement means [there are now 40 Connected Beginnings sites across Australia](#).

In 2021, we committed \$81.8 million to expanding Connected Beginnings to 50 sites nationally by 2025.

The program is jointly delivered by the Departments of Education, and Health and Aged Care in partnership with SNAICC National Voice of our Children and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

[See the media release announcing the 6 new sites](#)

Help us spread the word about activity test changes

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test has changed for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Families can now get at least 36 hours of CCS per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. This is regardless of their activity level.

Families should call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) to let them know a child in their care is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. It is voluntary to tell Services Australia this.

You can help families who may be eligible by letting them know about the changes.

Find [resources about the changes](#) on our website.



Spotlight on the sector

Getting a taste of life working in ECEC



Lauren, pictured above, dreamed of working like her nans with children but she didn't think she'd get a chance.

She got her break when she successfully applied to undergo a 6-week taster program with a local early learning centre. It provided her a direct pathway to a full-time traineeship. 'I have been loving all of it,' Lauren says.

The program is an example of a provider showing creativity to address workforce challenges.

Read [the case study about the Lady Gowrie Tasmania program on our website](#).

Do you have a great local story you want to share? Email us at ECECcommunication@education.gov.au

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Avoiding an overpayment

Sometimes, you may receive more CCS than you're entitled to. This is known as an overpayment.

Overpayments generally occur if you withdraw or change a session report, such as amending to record fewer hours of care.

If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to pay back the difference. This is called offsetting. You can see if offsetting has occurred in your payment advice in the Child Care Subsidy System.

The best way to avoid an overpayment is to submit accurate and timely session reports.

Find out more about [overpayments](#) and [submitting session reports](#) on our website.



For families

Child Care Subsidy balancing has started

Services Australia has started balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2022–23 financial year.

You must confirm your income so Services Australia can balance your CCS.

You can confirm your income by:

- lodging your tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), or
- telling Services Australia you don't need to lodge a tax return, even if you've already told the ATO.

Once Services Australia has balanced your CCS, they will send you an outcome.

Find out more about [CCS balancing](#) on the Services Australia website.



From the department

FDC and IHC providers: report your working with children checks

Family Day Care and In Home Care providers have specific obligations regarding working with children checks (WWCCs). Take steps today to ensure you are meeting your obligations under Family Assistance Law and avoid compliance action.

Family Day Care and In Home Care providers must:

- ensure any person required by state or territory law to hold a WWCC, has a current check
- report those checks in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS).

The following people require a WWCC:

- all educators
- some persons with management or control (PMCs) and persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service.

The WWCC regulator in your state or territory can provide more details about who requires a WWCC. Find a list of WWCC regulators on the [Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission website](#).

What you must report

For all people who require a WWCC, you must report:

- new checks within 7 days
- changes to existing checks within 24 hours of becoming aware of the change, including if a check is renewed, extended, suspended, revoked, lapsed or expired.

How to report

Report WWCCs via the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

If you use third-party software, contact your software provider for help. Some software providers have developed task cards to help you report WWCCs correctly.

If you use the PEP, please see [our task card](#) for help.

What happens if you don't report

If an educator does not have a current WWCC, or you fail to report the check to us, any sessions of care provided by the educator will not be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

We may also take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations. Compliance action may include:

- issuing an infringement
- placing conditions on your approval
- suspending or cancelling your approval
- raising a provider debt.

For your action

We encourage you to take the following steps today to ensure you are meeting your obligations and avoid compliance action:



- check your WWCCs in the CCSS
- report any missing checks and update any out-of-date checks
- remove any educators that are no longer providing care at your service
- contact your software provider to ensure you are reporting WWCCs correctly.

How to become an approved provider

You must be approved to operate an early childhood education and care service and administer the CCS in Australia.

You must be approved by both:

- the Australian Government
- your state or territory government.

You can now apply for both approvals in one place – the National Quality Agenda IT System.

We recommend applying as early as possible before you start operating.

Approval is not automatic and should not be assumed. We have a rigorous assessment process to ensure early childhood education and care is delivered correctly, by responsible and law-abiding people.

We can only assess applications that include all the mandatory information and evidence.

We have [step-by-step guidance on the process](#) on our website. If you're planning on applying, please read this information carefully.

You can also [join our Facebook group](#) to get information and help before you're approved.

Spotlight on the sector

New national approved learning frameworks

The national approved learning frameworks have been updated to reflect contemporary practices and contain new principles and clearer guidance for educators.

Belonging Being and Becoming is for young children from birth to 5 years of age. My Time, Our Place is for school-age children and can be used at Outside School Hours Care services.

Throughout 2023, providers, services and educators can familiarise themselves with the updated frameworks and begin incorporating them into program and practice. They will become mandatory in early 2024.

Visit the [ACECQA website](#) to:

- download the updated frameworks
- read detailed information about the updates
- find out more about the transition process.

Wear It Purple Day

Wear something purple this Friday 25 August for Wear It Purple Day!



Wear It Purple strives to foster supportive, safe, empowering, and inclusive environments for rainbow young people. This year's theme, 'Write Your Story', encourages the importance of personal expression and individuality.

[Learn more about Wear It Purple Day and explore how you can get involved.](#)

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Have you tried our online learning?

We're introducing online learning for the early childhood education and care sector later this year. Complete the first course on your obligation to collect gap fees electronically.

Soon, new online courses will help you meet your obligations under Family Assistance Law. The courses will be suitable for providers, services and educators across all care types.

We've made the first course available for you to try out now.

The electronic payment of gap fees course will help you understand and comply with new obligations that came into effect on 1 July 2023.

Learn more and complete the first course [via our website](#).

Make sure to [join our Facebook group](#) to be the first to know when the learning platform launches.

Need a refresher on enrolments?

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS payments.

All children who attend approved care must be enrolled. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

Children who get CCS must have the right enrolment in place for payments to be made.

An enrolment links:

- the child
- the person claiming CCS (usually a parent or carer), and
- the service.

Visit our website to check your understanding of [the enrolment process](#).

Supporting the workforce

Professional development subsidies to support your workforce

We've sent emails to eligible providers with invitations to apply for 2 new subsidies designed to support professional development for your educators.

The [professional development subsidy](#) supports qualified early childhood educators to undertake additional training.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) supports early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.



Initially, eligible providers are those with:

- First Nations services and educators
- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations.

If you've applied for one or both subsidies, make sure the application you've returned is complete and you have included all required information. Email ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au with any questions about eligibility for the subsidies or advice regarding your application.

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

For families

Child Care Subsidy has changed for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

Did you know you can now get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in your care, regardless of the amount of recognised activity you do?

If you are caring for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child and would like to get at least 36 hours of CCS, you will need to call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#). It is voluntary to do this.

You may get more than 36 hours of CCS per fortnight based on your circumstances and the amount of recognised activity you do – this will not change.

Your CCS rate will continue to be based on your income. You must still pay the gap fee.

Watch [a short video about the changes](#) on the Department of Education website.



From the department

2022–23 CCS balancing has started

Services Australia has started balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2022–23 financial year.

Families who get CCS must confirm their income with Services Australia so their payments can be balanced.

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return, even if they've already told the ATO.

Once Services Australia has balanced a family's CCS, they will send them an outcome.

Please assure families that Services Australia know the importance of balancing payments and that they'll do their best to complete the balancing process as quickly as they can.

You may also wish to display a [balancing basics poster](#) at your service.

We have more information for providers [on our website](#). Please direct families with questions to the [Services Australia website](#).

Help us spread the word about activity test changes

The CCS activity test has changed for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children. Have you checked out our [new resources](#) about the changes?

Families can now get at least 36 hours of CCS per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. This is regardless of their activity level.

Families should call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) to let them know a child in their care is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. It is voluntary to tell Services Australia this.

We partnered with SNAICC, the National Voice for our Children, on resources you can download and distribute with families in your community. The resources include a video, flyer, blog and social media tile with information about the changes.

Go to our website to [download the resources and learn more about the changes](#).

Department's investigation uncovers suspected fraud

You may have noticed some media coverage about an alleged Family Day Care fraud the department has been involved in with the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

Read about the recent operation on the [AFP website](#).

The department conducts investigations and joint agency operations to help keep the early childhood education and care system fair.

If you think a service, or someone at a service, is doing something illegal or fraudulent, you can tell us anonymously. Call 1800 664 231 or send an email to tipoffline@education.gov.au.



Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is now home to a network of over 6,800 early childhood education and care representatives.

Our Facebook group is a space to:

- keep up to date with the department's policies and programs
- get updates in times of emergency
- share information directly from the group to your own page
- connect with others in the sector.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to [join the group](#) to learn, explore, and connect with us and others in the sector.

Spotlight on the sector

Latest NQF Snapshot released

The Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has released the latest National Quality Framework (NQF) Snapshot.

The latest snapshot shows that the proportion of early childhood education and care services rated Meeting National Quality Standard (NQS) or above remains at 89%, a great result for the sector.

The quarterly snapshots provide an overview of the sector, including the progress and results of quality assessment and rating against the NQS.

Read the [latest NQF Snapshot](#) on ACECQA's website.

Get involved in National Science Week

National Science Week runs from 12 to 20 August and is Australia's annual celebration of science and technology.

The initiative aims to encourage children to be fascinated by the world we live in. This year's theme is **Innovation: Powering Future Industries**.

Visit the [National Science Week](#) website to find out how your service can get involved.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Avoiding an infringement

We may 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.

Many providers comply with the law and do the right thing. However, where certain rules are not being followed, we can use infringements to help change provider behaviour.

An infringement is a fine and can be expensive.



Infringements are issued for a range of reasons, including:

- failure to keep contact details up to date
- failure to provide notification of working with children checks
- failure to report fee information
- failure to submit session reports on time
- failure to provide notifications on time
- failure to keep records.

See the list of [FAL provisions for which we can issue an infringement](#).

We send infringements by email and by post. If you do get an infringement, you have 28 days to pay the fine.

Find out [what to do if you get an infringement](#).

The best way to avoid an infringement is to be aware of and comply with your obligations under FAL. Read more about [your obligations](#).

For families

Tell Services Australia if your circumstances change

If you get Child Care Subsidy (CCS), you have an ongoing responsibility to keep your information up to date.

You must tell Services Australia if:

- your family's income changes
- your or your partner's activity levels change
- your relationship status changes
- there are any other changes to your or your partner's circumstances.

Services Australia needs this information to pay you the correct amount of subsidy. They may overpay you if your details are not up to date. If this happens, you'll have to pay back the amount you owe.

The easiest way to update your details is online. Update your details using your Centrelink online account through myGov, or the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

Help families understand activity test changes

Did you know families can now get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care? This is regardless of the family's activity level.

Help families at your service understand how to access at least 36 hours of CCS by:

- sharing this [video](#) with families
- displaying and distributing this [flyer](#) and [blog](#) at your service
- sharing this [tile](#) on your social media channels
- directing families with questions to the [Services Australia website](#)

Read more about the activity test changes [on our website](#).

Spotlight on the sector

Early childhood learning trajectories webinar series

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) is hosting a series of free webinars to introduce its early childhood learning trajectories.

AERO is Australia's independent education evidence body. The early childhood learning trajectories resources are a clear and engaging translation of the evidence on how children learn and develop in the first 5 years of life and were created to support teachers and educators.

AERO is offering a one-hour information session each for:

- leaders (directors of services, educational leaders, area managers and others)
- teachers and educators
- the broader sector.

The sessions will include information on how AERO supports the early childhood education and care sector. They will offer ideas on how you can use the learning trajectories in your daily work.

The first free webinar is later this month. You can now [register for a learning trajectories information session](#).

For background and details, [read about AERO's early childhood learning trajectories](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Identifying PMCs at your organisation

Providers have specific legal obligations under Family Assistance Law. These obligations are imposed upon certain people at your organisation known as persons with management or control (PMCs).



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

- 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.

You must identify **all** PMCs and keep their details up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System.

You must notify us when a PMC:

- joins your organisation
- leaves your organisation
- changes their name or contact details
- has changes to their working with children check.

If PMC details are not up to date:

- we cannot communicate essential information to you
- families may not get their CCS payments
- we may take regulatory action, including issuing an infringement.

Visit our website to see [who is considered a PMC](#) at your organisation and ensure their details are up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

Supporting the workforce

Reminder: ECEC workforce subsidies

We've sent emails to eligible providers with invitations to apply for 2 new subsidies designed to support professional development for your educators:

- [the professional development subsidy](#)
- [the paid practicum subsidy](#).

If you've successfully applied for one or both subsidies, and you want to receive the grant before **30 September**, you must submit your completed application by **18 August**. Applications for payments later in the 2023–24 financial year will still remain open.

Read more about [workforce measures on our website](#). Email ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au with any questions about eligibility for the subsidies or advice regarding your application.

For families

StartingBlocks.gov.au: find child care

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

On the Starting Blocks website, you can:



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

Visit StartingBlocks.gov.au to start searching.



From the department

New resources: changes to the activity test

The activity test changed for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children on 10 July. We partnered with SNAICC - National Voice of our Children on new resources to help families understand the changes.

Families can now get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. This is regardless of their family's activity level.

Families should tell Services Australia that they have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care if they would like to get at least 36 hours of subsidised care.

Families can call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) to let them know a child in their care is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. It is voluntary to tell Services Australia this.

Families may get more than 36 hours of CCS per fortnight based on their circumstances and the amount of recognised activity they do.

A family's CCS rate will continue to be based on their income. Families must still pay the gap fee.

We have new resources to help you spread the word, including:

- a [video](#) you can share with families
- a [flyer](#) and [blog](#) you can display and distribute at your services
- a [social media tile](#) you can share on your channels.

Find these resources and read more about the changes on our website.

2022–23 session reports close Sunday

You must submit all session reports for the 2022–23 financial year by 11.59 pm AEST this Sunday.

The Child Care Subsidy System will close for the 2022–23 financial year from 7 August. You will not be able to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any sessions of care between 11 July 2022 and 9 July 2023.

Submitting your session reports by this deadline is essential so Services Australia can balance family payments.

Submitting accurate session reports on time is required under Family Assistance Law. Failure to comply with your obligations may result in compliance action.

Find guidance on submitting session reports [on our website](#).

Business support for CCCF grant recipients

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) grant recipient can now access new, free business support. The support is aimed at helping current grant recipients maintain and operate financially viable and sustainable services.

Experts can help services:

- do a business review



- identify cost drivers and savings
- determine the best business and service delivery models to use.

For more information about the grant, eligibility and how to apply, [go to our website](#).

Spotlight on the sector

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day is this Friday, 4 August.

An annual initiative from [SNAICC](#), it encourages all Australians to acknowledge the crucial impact that culture, family, and community play in the life of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child. This year's theme is 'Little Voices, Loud Futures'.

Ensuring that children are engaged in high- quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years is a core priority of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Families can now get at least 36 hours of CCS per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. If you have Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children at your service who may benefit from this change, make sure to let their family know. Read more about the changes to the activity test [on our website](#).

Plus, find resources and ideas on how to celebrate on [the National Children's Day website](#).

Inclusion resources for educators

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has developed a series of resources to support inclusive practices in early childhood education and care settings.

Access, participation and positive outcomes: inclusion in early childhood is a free resource for educators at every stage of their career. The collection includes:

- online self-paced professional learning courses
- series of short animations in accessible language
- 12-episode podcast series
- set of downloadable e-books with practical approaches to supporting children's development.

The development of the collection is funded through the department's [Inclusion Support Program](#).

Find out more and access the resources [on the ECA website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Salary sacrificing early childhood education and care fees

Do you have families that pay their early childhood education and care fees through salary sacrifice? Make sure you're reporting their fees correctly to avoid compliance action.

Salary sacrificing is considered a third-party payment. There are rules you must follow when a third party contributes to a family's fees.



Generally, when a third party helps a family pay its early childhood education and care fees, you must deduct the contribution from the total session fee.

The family's CCS rate will then be applied to the reduced session fee. This is because families are only entitled to CCS in relation to the amount they have to pay after any third-party payments.

The family must still pay a gap fee.

We have [examples on our website](#) to help you understand how to report different types of third-party payments. We have published a new example about salary sacrificing.

Reporting the correct fee information is a requirement under Family Assistance Law. We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations.

Read more about third-party payments [on our website](#).

Supporting the workforce

Register for employer webinar series

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is hosting a new webinar series Hiring Outside the Box to help you develop your workforce.

You will hear from industry experts and employers about recruitment strategies they've used, including the benefits of tapping into new pools of talent and hiring a diverse and inclusive team.

The first webinar will take place on Wednesday 9 August from 12–12.30 pm AEST.

Find out more and register [on the DEWR website](#).

For families

2022–23 Child Care Subsidy balancing starts soon

Services Australia will start balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2022–23 financial year from mid-August.

You must confirm your income with Services Australia so your CCS can be balanced.

You can confirm your income by:

- lodging your tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), or
- telling Services Australia you don't need to lodge a tax return, even if you've already told the ATO.

Once Services Australia has balanced your CCS, they will send you an outcome.

For more information about the balancing process, go to the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

2022–23 session reports close soon

You must submit all session reports for the 2022–23 financial year by 11.59 pm AEST on Sunday 6 August.

The Child Care Subsidy System will close for the 2022–23 financial year from 7 August. You will not be able to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any sessions of care between 11 July 2022 and 9 July 2023.

Submitting your session reports by this deadline is essential so Services Australia can balance family payments.

Submitting accurate session reports on time is required under Family Assistance Law. Failure to comply with your obligations may result in compliance action.

Find more information on our website about [submitting session reports](#).

Business support for Community Child Care Fund grant recipients

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) grant recipients can apply for new free business support.

The support is aimed at helping grant recipients maintain and operate financially viable and sustainable services.

Experts can help services:

- do a business review
- identify cost drivers and savings
- determine the best business and service delivery models to use.

Business support will be available for the 2023–24 financial year from July 2023.

Find more information on our website about [CCCF business support](#).

New Inclusion Support Portal resources

We have updated information about the Inclusion Support Portal (IS Portal) on our website.

Ten new resources are now available to assist providers, services and Inclusion Agencies who access and use the IS Portal.

Visit our website to see the new resources, including [fact sheets, flow charts and task cards](#).

Spotlight on the sector

Celebrate Early Learning Matters Week

Embracing the theme ‘learning through connection’, this year’s Early Learning Matters Week invites you to consider and share the ways that connection supports children’s learning.

Early Learning Matters Week 2023 takes place from 24 to 28 July and is organised by Early Childhood Australia. It raises awareness and understanding of the importance of early childhood education and care in Australia.

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



It's National Out of School Hour Care Educators Day

Today is National Out of School Hour Care Educators Day, an annual event to celebrate and recognise the important role educators play in the lives of children.

The 2023 theme is 'At the Heart of the Community'. The event is coordinated by the Network of Community Activities and member organisations of NOSHA (The National Association for Out of School Hours Care in Australia).

Find resources and ideas to get involved on the [Network of Community Activities website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Reporting your fees

From next month, we will be checking that providers are reporting fees accurately. We will take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations.

Compliance action may include:

- issuing an infringement
- putting conditions on your approval
- suspending or cancelling your approval
- suspending Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments for 3 weeks.

Reporting fee information is a requirement under Family Assistance Law. You must report:

- current hourly or daily session fees before CCS, discounts or reductions, and
- any changes to fees, within 14 days of the change.

If you have a range of fees you must report them.

Vacancy and fee information must be reported via the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

We publish your fee information on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families find the care that best suits their needs.

Find more information on our website about:

- [reporting obligations](#)
- [payments and fees](#)
- [infringements](#).

Collecting gap fees

We've published updated guidance about your obligation to collect gap fees from families electronically.

Under Family Assistance Law, you must take all reasonable steps to collect gap fees from families using electronic funds transfer (EFT).

We have information on our website to help you comply with this obligation. The information:



- illustrates the type of governance arrangements that would demonstrate you are taking all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically
- is intended to help you develop your own policies and procedures to suit your business.

We conduct audits to check you are complying.

Find more information on our website about [collecting gap fees](#).

For families

Understanding the changes to Child Care Subsidy for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

You can now get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in your care, regardless of the amount of recognised activity you do.

If you are caring for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child and would like to get at least 36 hours of CCS, you will need to call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#). It is voluntary to do this.

You may get more than 36 hours of CCS per fortnight based on your circumstances and the amount of recognised activity you do – this will not change.

Your CCS rate will continue to be based on your income. You must still pay the gap fee.

Watch a new video about what the changes mean for you at [childcaresubsidy.gov.au](#).

Read more about the activity test on the [Services Australia website](#).



Child Care Subsidy has increased

The Child Care Subsidy increased on 10 July 2023.

Most families using early childhood education and care now get more subsidy. More families are now eligible for the subsidy.

Find resources to help families understand the changes at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

From the department

Business support for Community Child Care Fund grant recipients

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) grant recipients can apply for new free business support

The support is aimed at helping grant recipients maintain and operate financially viable and sustainable services.

Experts can help services:

- do a business review
- identify cost drivers and savings
- determine the best business and service delivery models to use.

For more information about the grant, eligibility and how to apply, [go to our website](#).

2022—23 session reports closing soon

You must submit all session reports for the 2022–23 financial year by 11.59 pm AEST on Sunday 6 August.

The Child Care Subsidy System will close for the 2022–23 financial year from 7 August. You will not be able to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any sessions of care between 11 July 2022 and 9 July 2023.

Submitting your session reports by this deadline is essential so Services Australia can balance family payments.

Submitting accurate session reports on time is required under Family Assistance Law.

Failure to comply with your obligations may result in compliance action.

Find guidance on submitting session reports [on our website](#).

Spotlight on the sector

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission wants to hear from Family Day Care and In Home Care educators

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is asking Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) educators to contribute to its price inquiry.



If you are a FDC or IHC provider, please share the links below with your educators:

- [FDC survey](#)
- [IHC educator survey](#).

Educator feedback will have a direct influence on the ACCC's understanding of ECEC in Australia.

The survey closes at midnight AEST on Sunday 30 July and all responses are anonymous. If you have questions about the survey email ChildcareInquiryTaskforce@acc.gov.au.

Watch Be You conference sessions

Sessions from Be You's virtual conference are now online.

This year's conference, held in May, explored what it means to 'thrive'. It provided practical approaches to foster resilient and inclusive learning communities.

Check out the recordings and find resources to promote children's mental health and wellbeing on the [Be You website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Backdating child wellbeing certificates and determinations

Providers play an important role in giving families access to Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing. Here's what you need to know about backdating access to the subsidy.

You can give families access to the child wellbeing subsidy through a [certificate](#) or a [determination](#).

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

You may be able to backdate up to 13 weeks in exceptional circumstances. The exceptional circumstances are outlined in section 37 of the [Guide to ACCS child wellbeing](#).

You must have evidence showing that an exceptional circumstance applies. This is in addition to the evidence you must hold demonstrating the child is at risk.

Learn more about backdating certificates and determinations in the [Guide to ACCS child wellbeing](#).

Supporting the workforce

ECEC workforce subsidies: did you receive an invitation to apply?

If you are eligible for the new workforce subsidies, you should have received an email with information on how to apply.

Initially, eligible providers will be those with:

- First Nations services and educators
- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations.



If you are eligible, you should have received an email from DocuSign. This was sent to the provider-level email address you have entered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

If you believe you are eligible and you did not receive an email inviting you to apply, please contact us at ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au

Read more about how to apply for these [professional development opportunities](#).

For families

Child Care Subsidy has changed for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

You can now get at least 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in your care, regardless of the amount of recognised activity you do.

If you are caring for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child and would like to get at least 36 hours of CCS, you will need to call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#). It is voluntary to do this.

You may get more than 36 hours of CCS per fortnight based on your circumstances and the amount of recognised activity you do, this will not change.

Your CCS rate will continue to be based on your income. You must still pay the gap fee.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



Child Care Subsidy has increased

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) has increased. Most families using early childhood education and care (ECEC) will get more subsidy and more families are also now eligible for CCS.

Changes include:

- The family income limit to get CCS has increased to \$530,000.
- The maximum amount of CCS has increased from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less get a CCS rate of 90%.
- Families earning over \$80,000 get a CCS rate that decreases by 1% for each \$5,000 of family income. This rate reaches 0% for families earning \$530,000.
- Families earning below \$362,408 with more than one child aged 5 or under in care get a higher rate for their second and younger children.
- Families with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care can get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight, regardless of their circumstances

What do families need to do?

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything to get the new rates. Services Australia is applying the changes automatically.

Families who earn between \$356,756 and \$530,000 may now be entitled to CCS. These families can [lodge a CCS claim](#) with Services Australia.

Some families already using care may currently be assessed for CCS and get 0% but are now eligible for an increased rate. These families should check that their [income estimate](#) is up to date through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Families should tell Services Australia that they have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care if they would like to get at least 36 hours of subsidised care.

Families can call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) to let them know a child in their care is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. It is voluntary to tell Services Australia this.

Families do not need to do anything if they already get more than 36 hours of subsidy based on their circumstances.

What do providers need to do?

Providers don't need to do anything to get the increased rate. You should:

- continue [submitting session reports](#) accurately and on time
- tell families when the CCS changes will take effect with regard to their service's billing practices.

Find resources to help families understand the changes at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

Providers who administer CCS can stay up to date [on our website](#).



From the department

Update your contact details

You must keep your contact details up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

You must also identify all [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) in the system and keep their information up to date.

If this information is not correct:

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

Update your details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Spotlight on the sector

ACCC child care price inquiry interim report

The interim report of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) [inquiry into ECEC prices](#) is now available.

It provides early insight into the ACCC's investigations into prices, affordability and the market for ECEC. The report also examines the structure of the ECEC market and considers how families use care.

The interim report draws on Department of Education administrative data, preliminary results of the ACCC's survey of parents and guardians and information provided directly to the ACCC by ECEC providers.

The ACCC will continue to conduct detailed sector analysis and gather information about the cost of providing ECEC. It will closely watch the pricing behaviour of providers as the CCS increases take effect.

This information will help shape the ACCC's September consultation paper that will include analysis of costs, the effectiveness of price regulation mechanisms, and potential draft findings and recommendations.

The ACCC's final report will be delivered to the government by 31 December 2023. The ACCC's schedule of consultations is available on the [ACCC child care inquiry page](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Avoid common enrolment mistakes

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS. Below are some common mistakes to avoid when enrolling children.

Families should make a CCS claim first

Families should [lodge a CCS claim](#) before their child starts at your service.



If a child starts at your service before the family has lodged a claim, or while their claim is being assessed, you must charge full fees. If the family is assessed as eligible, any backdated CCS will be paid directly to the family.

Use the correct enrolment type

Except in very limited circumstances, children must be enrolled under a Complying Written Arrangement to get CCS payments.

Identify the person who made the CCS claim

Enrolment notices must identify the person who made the CCS claim. If you don't identify this person, Services Australia cannot make CCS payments.

Families must confirm the enrolment

Once you've submitted an enrolment, the family must confirm the details via their [Centrelink online account](#). Services Australia cannot make CCS payments until the enrolment is confirmed.

Read more about [enrolling children](#).

Supporting the workforce

ECEC workforce subsidies: did you receive an application?

If you are eligible for the new workforce subsidies, you should have received an email, including an application form.

We have sent emails to eligible providers with information about the subsidies and how to apply.

The subsidies support the training of ECEC educators to improve employee retention in the ECEC workforce, and to build supply and capacity across the sector.

The professional development subsidy will support qualified early childhood educators to undertake additional training.

The paid practicum subsidy will support early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.

Initially, eligible providers will be those with:

- First Nations services and educators
- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations.

If your service is eligible, you should have received an email from DocuSign. This was sent to the provider-level email address you have entered in the Child Care Subsidy System. On opening the email, you will see the Australian Government crest and that the email comes from the ECEC Workforce Taskforce, with a reference to ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au

Interested providers will need to complete the application form and return it for us to assess. We will then send grant outcome letters to all applicants. If you're successful, we will also provide a letter of agreement for applicants to sign.

If you believe you are eligible and you do not receive an email by 15 July inviting you to apply, contact us at ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au



The payment for a subsidy will occur in the quarter of the 2023–24 financial year you apply. The deadlines for submissions and the payment dates for each quarter are in the guidelines for these subsidies.

Read more about these [professional development opportunities](#).

Extended work rights for international early childhood graduates

Post-study work rights have been extended for international early childhood education graduates.

The extensions are linked to workforce shortages in particular sectors. They enable international students to work for longer in Australia

Post-study work rights have been extended for international students studying:

- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, from 2 years to 4 years
- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education in a regional location, from 2 years to 5 years
- Masters of Teaching Early Childhood, from 3 years to 5 years
- Masters of Teaching Early Childhood in a regional location, from 3 years to 6 years.

Read the [list of all courses where extended post-study work rights apply on our website](#).

Extensions apply from 1 July 2023 across more than 3,000 courses in Australia.

For families

Child Care Subsidy has increased

The Child Care Subsidy has increased.

Most families will get more subsidy. More families are now eligible for the subsidy.

To find out what this means for you, visit childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

Gap fees must be paid electronically

The way you pay your gap fee has changed. You must now pay your fees via an electronic payment.

The gap fee is the difference between your child care fees and Child Care Subsidy entitlement.

An electronic payment can include a bank or credit card payment, direct deposit or BPAY.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



Child Care Subsidy is increasing on Monday

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is increasing from Monday. Most families using early childhood education and care will get more CCS. Some families previously not eligible for CCS will now get it.

What's changing?

From Monday:

- The family income limit to get CCS is increasing to \$530,000.
- The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families earning below \$362,408 with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children.

What do families need to do?

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything to get the new rates. Services Australia will apply the changes from Monday.

Families who earn between \$356,756 and \$530,000 may be entitled to CCS from Monday. Families who haven't claimed CCS, should [lodge a claim](#) with Services Australia.

Some families already using care may currently be assessed for CCS and get 0% but will be eligible for an increased rate from Monday. These families should check that their [income estimate](#) is up to date through their [Centrelink online account](#).

For more information, visit childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

Activity test changes start on Monday

The CCS activity test is changing for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children from Monday.

What's changing?

From Monday, families can get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. This is regardless of their family's circumstances.

What do families need to do?

Families should tell Services Australia that they have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care if they would like to get at least 36 hours of subsidised care.

Families can call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) to let them know a child in their care is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. It's voluntary to tell Services Australia this.



Families may get more than 36 hours of subsidy per fortnight based on their circumstances and the amount of recognised activity they do.

Families do not need to do anything if they already get more than 36 hours of subsidy based on their circumstances.

For more information, visit childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

From the department

The provider approval process has changed

We've made it simpler to apply to become an early childhood education and care provider.

Prospective providers can now apply for National Law approval and CCS approval in one place – the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#) (NQA ITS).

You need both approvals to operate a service that offers CCS. Previously, prospective providers had to prepare and submit each application via separate platforms.

If you've recently submitted your application in the Provider Entry Point, your application will still be assessed as usual. You do not need to reapply.

The changes also apply to existing providers. You'll need to use the [NQA ITS](#) when applying for a new service.

There is also new e-learning on [ACECQA's website](#) to help applicants understand their obligations before they apply.

Learn more about the [two types of approvals](#).

Go to [step-by-step instructions on the approval process](#).

Important information about absences at the start or end of an enrolment and balancing

All providers will shortly receive an email and letter about legislative amendments regarding absences at the start or end of an enrolment and balancing.

Amendments passed both Houses of Parliament on 22 June 2023 and came into effect on 29 June 2023.

If you have any questions send an email to absencesaftercare@education.gov.au.

Latest Child Care Subsidy data now available

We've published the latest data about CCS-approved care in the December quarter 2022.

Key findings from the December quarter 2022 report include:

- 1,403,850 children from 985,490 families used CCS-approved care
- 14,187 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 26.5 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$11.35
- the Australian Government paid \$2.79 billion in subsidies.



Go to the [December quarter 2022 report](#).

Spotlight on the sector

It's NAIDOC Week

The theme this NAIDOC Week is [For Our Elders](#).

The theme recognises that across every generation, Elders have played, and continue to play, an important role in our communities.

[National NAIDOC Week](#) celebrates and recognises the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is also an opportunity for all Australians to learn about the oldest, continuous living culture on earth.

Download the [2023 National NAIDOC poster](#), created by Bobbi Lockyer, a proud Ngarluma, Kariyarra, Nyulnyul and Yawuru artist, to display at your service.

ACCC child care price inquiry: interim report published

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has released the [interim report from its inquiry into early childhood education and care \(ECEC\) prices](#).

The interim report provides early insights into the ACCC's investigations into prices and affordability. The report also examines the structure of the ECEC market, and considers how families use care.

The report draws on:

- department data
- preliminary results from the ACCC's survey of parents and guardians
- information providers submitted directly to the inquiry.

The ACCC will continue to conduct detailed sector analysis, and gather information about the cost of providing ECEC. It will also closely watch the pricing behaviour of providers as Child Care Subsidy increases take effect from Monday.

This information will help shape the ACCC's September consultation paper, which will include:

- analysis of costs
- the effectiveness of price regulation mechanisms
- potential draft findings and recommendations.

The ACCC price inquiry's final report is due for delivery to the government by 31 December 2023.

The ACCC's schedule of consultations is available on the [ACCC child care inquiry page](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Changes to gap fee payments are here

Changes to gap fee payments came into effect on 1 July.



Families must now pay the gap fee using electronic funds transfer, or EFT.

As an approved provider, you are responsible for ensuring you, your services and your educators comply with this new obligation.

The department will conduct regular audits to ensure providers are collecting gap fees electronically. We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations.

We have detailed information for providers on our website, including:

- typical EFT payment methods
- what to do if a family needs help using EFT
- exceptions available in limited circumstances
- how we'll check EFT payments
- how to ensure your services and educators are complying.

Learn about [electronic payment of gap fees](#).

New obligations for large providers are here

New financial reporting obligations for large providers came into effect on 1 July.

Large providers must now report financial information to the department, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that:

- operates 25 or more services
- shares operation of 25 or more services with another provider
- plans to operate or share operation of 25 or more services.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances.

We've contacted large providers with more information. If you meet the above definition of a large provider but haven't been contacted, please email ECCECFinancialViability@education.gov.au.

Learn about the [new obligations for large providers](#).

Supporting the workforce

New subsidies: invitations sent to eligible providers

We have sent emails this week to eligible providers with information about the new workforce subsidies and how to apply.

The [professional development subsidy](#) will support qualified early childhood educators to undertake additional training.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) will support early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.



Initially, eligible providers will be those with:

- First Nations services and educators
- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations.

If you are eligible, you should have received an email from DocuSign. This was sent to the provider-level email address you have entered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

On opening the email, you will see the Australian Government crest and that the email comes from the ECEC Workforce Taskforce, with a reference to ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au.

Interested providers will need to complete the application form and return it for us to assess. We will then send grant outcome letters to all applicants. If you're successful, we will also provide a letter of agreement for applicants to sign.

If you believe you are eligible and have not received an email by 15 July inviting you to apply, contact us at ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au.

The payment for a subsidy will occur in the quarter of the 2023–24 financial year you apply. The deadlines for submissions and the payment dates for each quarter are in the [guidelines for these subsidies](#).

The subsidies aim to support the skills and training of ECEC educators to improve employee retention in the ECEC workforce, and to build supply and capacity across the sector.

For families

Child Care Subsidy Calculator

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is increasing from Monday.

Use the CCS Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to find out what your family might pay for early childhood education and care.

Learn more at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.



Are your families ready for Child Care Subsidy changes?

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is increasing from 10 July. Here's what families need to do.

Families who already get CCS

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything to get the new rates. Services Australia will apply the changes from 10 July.

Share the [fact sheet for families who already get CCS](#) with these families.

Families who will become eligible

Families who earn between \$356,756 and \$530,000 may be entitled to CCS from 10 July. Families who haven't claimed CCS, should [lodge a claim](#) with Services Australia.

Some families already using care may currently be assessed for CCS and get 0% but will be eligible for an increased rate from 10 July. These families should check that their [income estimate](#) is up to date through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Share the [fact sheet for families who will become eligible for CCS from July](#) with these families.

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care

Families earning below \$362,408 with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children from 10 July.

From 10 July, the rates for each child are worked out using two separate income tests. Families can use the CCS Calculator at [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to find out what their future rates may be.

Families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children can get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight, regardless of their family's circumstances, from 10 July.

If they would like to get at least 36 hours of subsidised care, families can call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) to let them know a child in their care is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. It's voluntary to tell Services Australia this.

Families may get more than 36 hours of subsidy per fortnight based on their circumstances and the amount of recognised activity they do. Families will still need to pay the gap fee.

Share the [fact sheet for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children](#) with these families.

More information

For more information, visit [childcaresubsidy.gov.au](#).



From the department

Integrity measures start 1 July

New integrity measures are about to come into effect. Here's a summary of what's changing on 1 July.

Changes to gap fee payments

From 1 July, families must pay the gap fee using electronic means.

Electronic funds transfer, or EFT, is when a customer pays a bill using electronic means. Typical EFT payment methods include:

- bank or credit card, including mobile wallets
- direct deposit or bank transfer, including PayID
- online payment systems through third-party software
- BPAY or Centrepay
- prepaid debit card.

Most services already accept EFT payments. Similarly, over 98% of families already use EFT to pay their gap fee.

[Exceptions](#) are available in limited circumstances.

We have [guidance for providers](#) on steps you can take to ensure that you, your services and educators are complying.

Learn more about the [changes to gap fee payments](#).

Complete our [new online learning course](#) to prepare for the change.

New obligations for large providers

From 1 July, large providers must report financial information to the department, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. We've contacted large providers to let them know what to do.

You must report within 3 months of the end of the financial reporting period. We will provide more information to large providers closer to when financial reports are due.

If you think these obligations apply to you but you haven't received an email, please contact ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au.

Learn more about the [new financial reporting obligations for large providers](#).

Child Care Subsidy balancing deadline on Friday

The deadline for families to confirm what they earned in 2021–22 and 2020–21 is this Friday. Families who miss the deadline may lose CCS or incur a debt.

Services Australia uses this information to check that families got the right amount of CCS. This process is called balancing.



The end of financial year marks two important balancing deadlines for families.

If a family does not confirm their 2021–22 income by 30 June, their CCS will stop and they'll have to pay full fees.

If a family does not confirm their 2020–21 income by 30 June, they will lose their CCS eligibility and may have to repay any CCS they got for that financial year.

Families can confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), or
- telling Services Australia that they don't need to lodge – even if they've already told the ATO.

Make sure families at your service don't miss the deadline. If families have questions, direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

Help us pilot new online learning

We're currently piloting new online learning. We're looking for providers to be amongst the first to try out the new platform.

The platform provides e-learning courses to help you meet your obligations under Family Assistance Law.

We invite you to join our user reference group, which is currently piloting the platform.

Members will have the opportunity to:

- test the platform and its courses
- provide feedback through course evaluation forms and pilot surveys.

If you would like to be involved, [express your interest via email](#) by 5 July 2023.

How to apply for Child Care Subsidy approval from Monday

From Monday, prospective providers can apply for National Law approval and CCS approval via a single platform – the [National Quality Agenda IT System \(NQA ITS\)](#).

CCS applications will temporarily close from 12.01 am on Saturday 1 July 2023. They'll reopen via the NQA ITS from 8 am on Monday 3 July 2023.

If you experience technical issues while using the NQA ITS please email nqaits@acecqa.gov.au.

Learn more about [changes to the provider approval process](#).

Spotlight on the sector

New ACECQA resources on disability access

New resources are available to help services ensure children with disability can access early childhood education.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has developed the resources with the disability and early childhood education and care (ECEC) sectors.



The resources help approved providers, nominated supervisors, coordinators, and all service staff to understand and implement their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

See the [resources about the Disability Discrimination Act on the ACECQA website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Make sure your contact details are up to date

You must keep your contact details, including email addresses, up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

You must also identify all [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) in the system and keep their information up to date.

Update your details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Supporting the workforce

Workforce grants: invitations to apply arriving soon

We'll shortly invite eligible providers to apply for our new workforce subsidies.

The [professional development subsidy](#) will help qualified early childhood educators to undertake additional training.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) will help early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.

We'll send an email to eligible ECEC providers with information about the subsidies and how to apply.

Initially, eligible providers will be those with:

- First Nations services and educators
- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations.

If you think you are eligible, from next week look out for an email from DocuSign. On opening the email, you will see the Australian Government crest and that the email comes from the ECEC Workforce Taskforce with a reference to ECECWorkforce@education.gov.au.

So we can contact you, please keep your details up-to-date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

Interested providers will need to complete the application form and return it for an assessment. We will then send grant outcome letters to all applicants. If you're successful, we will also provide a letter of agreement for applicants to sign.

Payments will occur in the quarter of the 2023–24 financial year for which you apply. The deadlines for submissions and the payment dates for each quarter are in the [guidelines for these subsidies](#).



For families

Child Care Subsidy Calculator

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is increasing from 10 July.

Use the CCS Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to find out what your family might pay for early childhood education and care from 10 July.

Learn more at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.



Are you ready for Child Care Subsidy changes?

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is increasing from 10 July.

Most families using early childhood education and care will get more CCS. Some families previously not eligible for CCS will now get it. Learn more about what's changing at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

If you have families who get CCS

In most cases, you don't need to do anything to get the changes to CCS. Please continue [submitting session reports](#) accurately and on time. Services Australia is working with software providers to implement the changes.

You should tell these families when the CCS changes will take effect with regard to your service's billing practices.

Share the [fact sheet for families who already get CCS](#) with these families.

If you have families who don't get CCS

We encourage you to talk to families who don't currently get CCS and let them know that they may soon be eligible.

This could include families who are not registered for CCS. These families will need to [lodge a CCS claim](#) with Services Australia.

Share the [fact sheet for families who will become eligible for CCS from July](#) with these families.

If you have families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

We encourage you to talk to families who have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care.

These families should tell Services Australia that they have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care if they would like to get at least 36 hours of subsidised care.

They can call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#). It is voluntary to identify a child as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

These families do not need to do anything if they already get more than 36 hours of subsidy based on their circumstances.

Share the [fact sheet for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children](#) with these families.

From the department

Changes to gap fees start soon

From 1 July, you must collect the gap fee using electronic means. You must do so even if the fee relates to care that occurred before 1 July.

For example, if a family has accrued a debt, they must pay it off electronically from 1 July.



Electronic funds transfer, or EFT, is when a customer pays a bill using electronic means. We outline [typical EFT payment methods](#) on our website.

Most services already accept EFT payments. Similarly, over 98% of families already use EFT to pay their gap fee.

We will audit this measure from 1 July. We'll check EFT payments against provider, service or educator bank statements and receipts. We'll also check any relevant reports if you use third-party software. We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations.

Read more about the [changes to gap fee payments](#).

If you haven't already, let your families know about the changes. We have [a kit you can download and use](#).

First look at new online learning

We're introducing online learning for the early childhood education and care sector soon. The first course is available now.

New online courses will help you meet your obligations under [Family Assistance Law](#). The courses are suitable for providers, services and educators across all care types.

A user reference group with over 500 participants from across the sector will be piloting the platform from 22 June. It is expected to launch later this year.

We've made the first course available to the whole sector.

With changes to gap fees coming on 1 July, the electronic payment of gap fees course will help you prepare for your new obligations.

Learn more and complete the first course [via our website](#).

Make sure to [join our Facebook group](#) to be the first to know when the learning platform launches.

2023–24 hourly rate caps

The CCS hourly rate caps will go up from 10 July.

The hourly rate caps are adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

See the 2023–24 hourly rate caps [on our website](#).



Spotlight on the sector

ECA Reconciliation Symposium: that's a wrap



This year, we were again proud sponsors of Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) [Reconciliation Symposium](#).

ECA, a peak early childhood advocacy organisation, hosted 280 attendees for the 2-day program in Hobart.

We sponsored 6 educators from across the country so they could attend the event.

Pictured, from left, are ECA chief executive Samantha Page, and scholarship recipients Simone Shevchenko from [Kadina Preschool Centre](#) in South Australia, Ailsa Zadow from [Lobethal Community Kindergarten](#) in South Australia, Jayne Lincoln from [Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School](#) in Western Australia, Renee Hogan from [Euroka Childrens Centre](#) in New South Wales, and Vanessa Yang from [Gillen Primary School](#) in the Northern Territory. Krystal Mennie from [Goodstart Mount Hutton](#) NSW, not pictured, was also a scholarship recipient.

The symposium facilitated engagement between First Nations early childhood education and care providers and educators, and the wider sector. The symposium included workshops on how to build a culturally inclusive service, and how to infuse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives with the Early Years Learning Framework.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Submit session reports on time

You must submit accurate and timely session reports – it's the law.

Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

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



Read more about [submitting session reports](#).

Supporting the workforce

Guidelines available for ECEC workforce subsidies

The guidelines for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce professional development and practicum subsidies are now available.

We've published the guidelines before we send more information in July so eligible providers can see what is involved. If you think you might be eligible, you should read the guidelines now.

We remind ECEC providers to keep their CCS contact information up-to-date.

The [professional development subsidy](#) will help qualified early childhood educators to gain additional training.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) will help early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.

Initially, the subsidies will prioritise:

- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations
- First Nations services and educators.

Read [the guidelines for the ECEC professional development and paid practicum subsidies](#).

For families

Child Care Subsidy Calculator

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is increasing from 10 July.

Use the CCS Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to find out what your family might pay for early childhood education and care from 10 July.

Learn more at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.



Check out childcaresubsidy.gov.au

Have your families visited childcaresubsidy.gov.au yet?

From 10 July, most families using early childhood education and care will get more Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Some families previously not eligible for CCS will now get it.

Find resources, including fact sheets, posters and translated materials to help families understand the changes at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

We'll continue to publish information for providers that administer CCS [on our website](#).

Families who are now eligible

Some families previously not eligible for CCS will soon become eligible.

We encourage you to write to families at your service who don't currently get CCS and let them know that they may soon be eligible.

This could include families who are not registered for CCS. These families will need to get a [Centrelink online account](#) through myGov or the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

Share the [fact sheet for families who will become eligible for CCS from July](#) to help these families understand what they need to do.

From the department

Child Care Subsidy hourly rate caps are changing soon

The CCS hourly rate caps will go up from 10 July 2023.

The hourly rate caps are adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The maximum hourly rate we subsidise is based on the type of care you provide. The 2023–24 hourly rate caps for each care type are outlined below.

Care type	Hourly rate cap for children below school age	Hourly rate cap for school-age children
Centre Based Day Care	\$13.73	\$12.02
Outside School Hours Care	\$13.73	\$12.02
Family Day Care	\$12.72	\$12.72
In Home Care (per family)	\$37.34	\$37.34

Learn more about hourly rate caps and see the current rates [on our website](#).

The family income thresholds are also changing as part of the government's broader changes to CCS. Stay up to date with the changes at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.



New obligations for large providers start soon

From 1 July, large providers must report financial information to the department, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

We define what a large provider is [on our website](#).

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. We're contacting large providers with more details. Check your provider-level email address. Look for an email from ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au.

If you think these obligations apply to you but you haven't received an email, please contact ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au.

Learn more about the [new financial reporting obligations for large providers](#).

Child Care Subsidy balancing deadlines

Families who got CCS in the 2021–22 and 2020–21 financial years must confirm their income by 30 June to avoid losing CCS or incurring a debt.

Services Australia uses this information to check that families got the right amount of CCS. This process is called balancing.

The end of financial year marks two important balancing deadlines for families.

If a family does not confirm their 2021–22 income by 30 June, their CCS will stop and they'll have to pay full fees.

If a family does not confirm their 2020–21 income by 30 June, they will lose their CCS eligibility and may have to repay any CCS they got for that financial year.

We have a new [poster about these deadlines](#) that you can print and display at your service.

We have more information for providers [on our website](#). Families should go to the [Services Australia website](#).

Streamlining the provider approval process

We're making it simpler to apply to become an approved provider.

From July 2023, prospective providers can apply for CCS and National Law approval in one place – the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#) (NQA ITS).

Providers need both approvals to operate a service that offers CCS. Currently, prospective providers must prepare and submit each application via separate platforms.

There will also be a new e-learning course to help applicants understand their obligations before they apply.

The streamlined process will apply to existing providers applying for a new service from July.

Learn more about the [changes to the provider approval process](#).



Spotlight on the sector

Help stop the spread of flu

The Department of Health and Aged Care has [resources you can share at your service](#) to encourage families to immunise their children against the flu.

Influenza in children can be serious. The influenza vaccine is safe, effective and free for children aged 6 months to under 5 years.

Learn more about the influenza vaccination for children under 5 on the [Department of Health and Aged Care's website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Child wellbeing reporting obligations

Providers who administer Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing have important reporting obligations.

ACCS child wellbeing is for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect. Providers apply for the child wellbeing subsidy on behalf of a family.

If you give a family access to ACCS child wellbeing, you must notify an appropriate support agency. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

When [issuing a certificate](#), you must notify a support agency within 6 weeks from the certificate start date. If you wish to [apply for a determination](#), you must notify a support agency before you apply.

An appropriate support agency is:

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

See a list of appropriate support agencies in [section 31 of the Guide to ACCS child wellbeing](#).

You must also follow any mandatory reporting obligations in your state or territory.

Read more about reporting obligations in the [Guide to ACCS child wellbeing](#).

Supporting the workforce

Guidelines available for ECEC workforce subsidies

The guidelines for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce professional development and practicum subsidies are available.

We remind providers to keep their contact information up-to-date in the [CCS System](#). Incorrect information can delay our ability to offer or pay grants.



We've published the guidelines before we send grant offers in July so eligible providers can see what is involved. If you think you might be eligible, you should read the guidelines now.

The subsidies are 2 of the 3 measures announced in the 2023–24 Budget. The measures are designed to:

- improve employee retention in the ECEC workforce
- build supply and capacity across the sector.

The [professional development subsidy](#) will help up to 75,000 qualified early childhood educators to gain additional training.

The [paid practicum subsidy](#) will help up to 6,000 early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.

A third measure, the [practicum exchange](#), will open in 2024 to help up to 2,000 early childhood teachers in training to complete a professional exchange program to give them broader practical experience before qualification.

Initially, the subsidies will prioritise:

- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations
- First Nations services and educators.

Read the [guidelines for the ECEC professional development and paid practicum subsidies](#).

Migrant visa salary threshold to rise

The minimum amount to be paid to migrant workers on 457 visas will increase on 1 July from \$53,900 to \$70,000.

This will apply to some ECEC educators and teachers.

The Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) allows skilled migrant workers to work for an approved business.

The Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) is a salary threshold used by the 457 program to:

- indicate an occupation is skilled
- ensure a visa holder has reasonable means of support in Australia.

New nomination applications after 1 July will need to meet the new TSMIT of \$70,000 or the [annual market salary rate](#), whichever is higher.

This change will not affect existing visa holders and approved nominations lodged before 1 July.

For more information about employing or sponsoring a migrant, see the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).

For families

CCS changes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test is changing for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

From 10 July, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children can get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight, regardless of their family's circumstances.



You can call Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) to let them know a child in your care is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. It is voluntary to identify a child as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

You may get more than 36 hours of CCS based on your circumstances and the amount of recognised activity you do. If you already get more than 36 hours of CCS you don't need to do anything.

Read more about the [activity test for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children](#).

Download a [fact sheet on the changes to CCS for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children](#).



Child Care Subsidy is changing soon

From 10 July, most families using early childhood education and care will get more Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Some families previously not eligible for CCS will now get it.

A national advertising campaign started on 3 June – check out the TV ad below!



What's changing?

From 10 July:

- The family income limit to get CCS is increasing to \$530,000.
- The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families earning below \$362,408 with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children.
- Families can get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care, regardless of their activity level.

What do families need to do?

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything to get the new rates. Services Australia will apply the changes for you from 10 July.

Families that earn between \$356,756 and \$530,000 may be entitled to CCS from 10 July. Families that haven't claimed CCS, should [lodge a claim](#) with Services Australia.



Some families already using care may currently be assessed for CCS and get 0% but will be eligible for an increased rate once the changes go live from 10 July. These families should check that their [income estimate](#) is up to date. They can check this through their Centrelink online account or the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

Families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

Families should tell Services Australia that they have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care if they would like to get at least 36 hours of subsidised care. Families can contact Services Australia on **136 150** to update their child's CCS details. It is voluntary for families to tell Services Australia if they have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care.

Families may get more than 36 hours of subsidy per fortnight based on their circumstances and the amount of recognised activity they do. Families do not need to do anything if they already get more than 36 hours of subsidy based on their circumstances.

Child Care Subsidy Calculator

Families can use the CCS Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to estimate what they might have to pay for early childhood education and care from 10 July.

New resources

We have new information and resources about the changes at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

Here, you'll find:

- a factsheet about the changes
- a factsheet for families who already get CCS
- a factsheet for families who are newly eligible
- a factsheet for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
- posters to display at your service.

Help us spread the word

We encourage you to help us spread the word with families. Below are some ideas.

Display a campaign poster in a prominent location at your service

[Download a poster.](#)

Share a post on your social media channels

Use the below words. You can also [download and share the campaign logo and video.](#)

The Child Care Subsidy is increasing from 10 July. If you already get CCS, you don't need to do anything. If you think you may become eligible, lodge a CCS claim today. Learn more at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

Share an article in your newsletter

Use the below words. You can also [download and share the campaign logo and posters.](#)

The Child Care Subsidy is increasing from 10 July.



Most families using early childhood education and care will get more CCS. Some families previously not eligible for CCS will now get it.

If you already get CCS, you don't need to do anything. If you think you may become eligible, lodge a CCS claim with Services Australia.

Learn more at childcaresubsidy.gov.au.

From the department

CCCF grant application deadline is Thursday 8 June

Are you interested in setting up an early childhood education and care service in an area of limited supply?

Grants are being made available to providers to set up new Centre Based Day Care services and Family Day Care premises:

- in disadvantaged regional and remote areas of Australia
- where there are no or limited such early childhood services.

Applications close this Thursday 8 June at 9 pm AEST.

Learn more [on our website](#).

CCS Helpdesk closed Monday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed because of the public holiday in most states and territories on Monday 12 June.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEST on Tuesday.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime [by email](#) and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Spotlight on the sector

Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy

The Australian Government has launched a [draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#) for public consultation.

Service providers, the care and support workforce, people who receive care and support and the broader community are encouraged to have their say on the draft strategy.

You can have your say through the [Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website](#).

You can also share this consultation opportunity with your own networks [using these social media resources](#).



Facts from Family Assistance Law

The enrolment process

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS payments. There are 4 steps in the enrolment process.

Step 1: The family must first lodge a CCS claim via their [Centrelink online account](#). Families should do this before their child starts at your service.

Step 2: The provider and the family then agree on care arrangements for the child. Families must agree to the care arrangements in writing. They can do this electronically or in hard copy. Care arrangements can cover more than one child attending the same service.

Step 3: Once the care arrangement has been established, the provider submits an enrolment notice in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#). You must submit an enrolment notice for each child covered by the arrangement. You must do this within 7 days after the end of the week in which you made the agreement.

Step 4: Once you've submitted an enrolment notice, the family will be prompted to confirm the enrolment via their [Centrelink online account](#). CCS payments will not start until the enrolment is confirmed.

Find out more about the enrolment process [on our website](#).

Supporting the workforce

Grant guidelines released for ECEC workforce subsidies

The guidelines for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce professional development and practicum subsidies are available.

We've published them before we send grant offers in July so eligible providers can see what is involved. If you think you might be eligible, you should [read the guidelines now](#).

The subsidies are 2 of the 3 measures announced in the 2023–24 Budget. The measures are designed to:

- improve employee retention in the ECEC workforce
- build supply and capacity across the sector.

The **professional development subsidy** will help up to 75,000 qualified early childhood educators to gain additional training.

The **paid practicum subsidy** will help up to 6,000 early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.

A third measure, the **practicum exchange**, will open in 2024 to help up to 2,000 early childhood teachers in training to complete a professional exchange program to give them broader practical experience before qualification.

Initially, the subsidies will prioritise:

- services and staff in regional, remote and very remote locations
- First Nations services and educators.

Learn about the professional development subsidy, including eligibility criteria, [on our website](#).



Learn about the paid practicum subsidy, including eligibility criteria, [on our website](#).

Read the guidelines for the ECEC professional development and paid practicum subsidies [on our website](#).



National Reconciliation Week



#Reconciliation #NRW2023 #BeAVoice

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time to learn about our country's shared histories, cultures, and achievements. The theme for NRW 2023, 'Be a Voice for Generations', encourages us to speak up for reconciliation in everyday life.

Read more about what you can do for NRW 2023 on the [National Reconciliation Week website](#).

The department's ongoing contributions towards reconciliation include the following.

Closing the Gap

First Nations children need access to services that are appropriate to their cultures.

The department contributes to 2 key measures for achieving this under the [Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#).

- **Target 3:** By 2025, increase to 95% the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in early childhood education.
- **Target 4:** By 2031, increase to 55% the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as 'on track' in 5 key developmental categories.

Actions include:

- changes to Child Care Subsidy (CCS) with [benefits for families with First Nations children](#)
- [new measures to support the early childhood education and care workforce](#) that give priority to First Nations services
- the ongoing [Preschool Reform Agreement](#) with the states and territories to improve opportunities in early learning for First Nations children.

Read more about the [Closing the Gap Plan](#).

New early childhood education and care services for remote communities

Four new services in some of Australia's most remote locations will ensure that more First Nations children can access early childhood education and care.

The First Nations-led new sites are:

- Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation in Tennant Creek, NT



- Puuya Foundation in Lockhart River, QLD
- Napranum Aboriginal Land Council in Napranum, QLD
- Wunan Foundation in Kununurra, WA.

Learn more about [delivering early childhood education and care services for remote communities](#).

Pilot to help up to 200 children prepare for school

Three pilot services across Victoria and Northern Territory will help up to 200 children, including many First Nations children, to prepare for school with stronger literacy and numeracy skills.

Read more about the [Early Learning Teaching Pilot](#).

From the department

Understand CCS changes



CCS is changing soon. Watch our video for providers to understand what's changing.

From 10 July:

- The family income limit to get CCS is increasing to \$530,000.
- The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families earning below \$362,408 with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children.

You can help families understand what the changes mean for them. Do this by:



- directing families to the CCS Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to find out what their future rates may be
- printing and displaying a [poster](#) and [fact sheet](#) at your service
- sharing social media with your families [using this kit](#)
- telling your families when the CCS changes will take effect with regard to your service's billing practices.

We have more information for providers about the changes [on our website](#).

Deadline approaches for new grant applications

The deadline for early childhood education and care providers to apply for a new grant opportunity is next week.

Grants are being made available to providers to set up new Centre Based Day Care services and Family Day Care premises:

- in disadvantaged regional and remote areas of Australia
- where there are no or limited such early childhood services.

Applications close on Thursday 8 June (9 pm AEST).

Learn more about the grant, including eligibility criteria, [on our website](#).

Apply on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

In Home Care quality and safety project

We have engaged ACECQA to deliver an In Home Care (IHC) quality and safety project.

The 2-year project will enhance the existing IHC framework and develop national standards.

Additionally, a professional development program will build awareness, knowledge and capability. This will include eLearning modules, webinars and workshops.

Consultation with IHC sector stakeholders is scheduled to commence late June.

For more information, email inhomecare@education.gov.au.

Spotlight on the sector

Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy

The Australian Government has launched a [draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#) for public consultation.

Service providers, the care and support workforce, people who receive care and support and the broader community are encouraged to have their say on the draft strategy.

You can have your say through [the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website](#).

You can also share this consultation opportunity with your own networks [using these social media resources](#).



Vaccinate to protect children from flu

You can help parents understand why it is important to protect young children from influenza.

Influenza can cause children under the age of 5 to become seriously ill. It can sometimes be fatal.

The best protection for children is getting [the influenza vaccine each year](#). The vaccine is safe, effective, and free for all children aged from 6 months to under 5 years through the [National Immunisation Program](#).

The Department of Health and Aged Care has sent promotional materials to services that encourage parents to protect their children against the flu with vaccinations.

Here are ways you can help to promote this important health message:

- Display the [Department of Health and Aged Care's poster](#) in your service. You can download and print it yourself or you can order printed copies from the department.
- Share the Department of Health and Aged Care's [factsheets on flu vaccination](#).
- In your emails to parents, share information to encourage them to book a free flu shot for each child.
- Use your social media channels to share information about the importance of vaccinating children. The Department of Health and Aged Care offers [some short videos](#) that you can share for this purpose.

[See Department of Health and Aged Care flu resources](#).

Learn more about the influenza vaccination for children at [the Department of Health and Aged Care's website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Reminder: requirement to report your fees

You must report your fees within 14 days of any change. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law (FAL).

You must report your current hourly or session fees before CCS, discounts, or reductions. If your service has a range of fees, such as per educator or age group, you can report a typical or average fee.

Your fees are published on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). Providing correct and up to date fees makes it easier for families to find and choose your service.

Keeping track of the changing cost of early childhood education and care is important to the community and a priority for the government. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is currently conducting an [inquiry into early childhood education and care prices](#).

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations. This may include issuing an infringement.

Report your fees via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. For help, see the [task card on reporting fees in the PEP](#) or contact your third-party software provider.

Take action now: FDC and IHC educator working with children checks

Recently, we've reminded you that FDC and IHC providers have specific obligations regarding working with children checks (WWCCs). Our records show that most providers have not yet fulfilled these obligations.

We're now contacting providers who have not reported current WWCCs.



If you receive an email from the department, you must read it closely and take action.

What you must report

You must report:

- a new educator's WWCC **within 7 days** of them starting at your service
- any changes to an existing educator's WWCC **within 24 hours** of becoming aware of the change, including if a WWCC is renewed or extended, suspended or revoked or has lapsed or expired.

How to report to us

Report WWCCs via the [PEP](#) or your third party software.

We have a [task card](#) to help you with the PEP. If you use third party software, contact your software provider for help.

Consequences if you don't report

Reporting WWCCs is a requirement under FAL.

If an educator does not have a current WWCC, or if you fail to report the check to us, any sessions of care provided by the educator will not be eligible for CCS.

We may also take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations. Compliance action may include issuing an infringement or a debt.

For families

Child Care Subsidy Calculator

Want to know how much Child Care Subsidy you can get?

Use the Child Care Subsidy Calculator to estimate what your family might pay for early childhood education and care from 10 July.

Go to StartingBlocks.gov.au.



From the department

Watch our video on the changes to Child Care Subsidy



From 10 July, most families using early childhood education and care will get more Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Some families previously not eligible for CCS will become eligible.

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything. Families that may become eligible when the changes occur should [lodge a CCS claim](#).

In most cases, you don't need to do anything to get the changes to CCS. [Continue submitting session reports](#) accurately and on time. Services Australia is working with software providers to implement the changes.

You can help families understand what the changes mean for them. Do this by:

- directing families to the CCS Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to find out what their future rates may be
- printing and displaying a [poster](#) and [fact sheet](#) at your service
- sharing social media with your families [using this kit](#)
- telling your families when the CCS changes will take effect with regard to your service's billing practices.

We have more information for providers about the changes [on our website](#).

Important information about absences at the start or end of an enrolment and balancing

We are sending a letter to all providers about absences at the start or end of an enrolment and balancing. The letter will be sent to the provider-level postal and email address that you have listed in the Child Care Subsidy System.

Read the information in the letter carefully. If you have any questions send an email with the subject line 'LC23' to CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au.

Applications for grant: deadline extended

The deadline for early childhood education and care providers to apply for a new grant opportunity has been extended.

Grants are being made available to providers to set up new Centre Based Day Care services and Family Day Care premises:

in disadvantaged regional and remote areas of Australia

where there are no or limited such early childhood services.

Applications will now close on Thursday 8 June.

Questions and answers have been updated on [GrantConnect](#) to clarify the guidelines for Family Day Care providers.

Learn more about the grant, including eligibility criteria, [on our website](#).

Apply on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

How authorities cracked crime syndicate

A new podcast tells how Commonwealth and state agencies partnered to catch and prosecute a provider that defrauded taxpayers of \$13 million in government payments.

A woman and her 2 adult children ran the criminal syndicate under the guise of 3 services in Melbourne that had no children. They claimed about \$800,000 per fortnight in payments.

After noting irregularities, we worked with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and other Commonwealth and state agencies to investigate.

The five-month investigation resulted in the arrest of 13 suspects and the seizure of \$1.18 million in assets. The three main offenders were sentenced to a collective total of nine years' jail.

[Listen to the AFP podcast on how Operation Caulis investigators pieced together the case.](#)

In the Budget, the Treasurer the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, [announced another \\$22.4 million](#) over 4 years to help us reinforce and safeguard the CCS against fraud and non-compliance.

This funding will ensure the department can detect and take strong action against those doing the wrong thing. Actions can include:

- cancelling or imposing conditions on provider approval
- issuing fines for non-compliance.

If you think a service is doing something illegal or fraudulent or is trying to get an unfair advantage, you can tell us anonymously by calling 1800 664 231 Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm (AEST).

You can [send an email to the tip-off line](#) anytime.



Families must confirm income by 30 June

Families must confirm what they earned in 2021–22 and 2020–21 by 30 June to avoid losing CCS or incurring a debt.

At the end of each financial year, Services Australia compares a family's income estimate with their actual income to check they got the right amount of CCS. This process is called balancing.

Families must confirm their income by 30 June for balancing to occur.

The end of financial year marks two important deadlines for families:

- first deadline for confirming 2021–22 income
- second deadline for confirming 2020–21 income.

If a family misses the first deadline, their CCS will stop.

If a family misses the second deadline, they will lose their CCS eligibility and may have to repay any CCS they got for that financial year.

You can help families by reminding them to confirm their income before the deadline.

We have more information for providers [on our website](#). Families should go to the [Services Australia website](#).

CCS Helpdesk closed Monday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday in the ACT on Monday 29 May.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEST on Tuesday 30 May.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime [by email](#) and we will respond during business hours.

Spotlight on the sector

ACCC ECEC price inquiry – survey of families

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) wants to hear from parents and guardians to understand the factors that influence their choice on whether or not to use ECEC services.

All families with caring responsibilities for children aged 0 to 14 years, or with children with a disability aged 0 to 18 years, are invited to complete the ACCC online survey.

In particular, the ACCC strongly encourages the following to take part:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families
- families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- parents and guardians of children with a disability or with complex needs.

The information gathered will help provide a complete picture of the issues impacting the price and availability of ECEC services in Australia.

The survey is open until 31 May 2023 and can be completed anonymously.



[Please share with the families using your service](#) – directly and via your social media accounts.

For more information about the ACCC price inquiry please visit the [ACCC website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Reporting your educator's working with children checks

Family Day Care and In Home Care providers have specific obligations regarding working with children checks (WWCCs).

Over the coming weeks we will be closely reviewing the details of FDC and IHC educator WWCCs you report to us, and checking if you are complying with your obligations. We will contact providers who have not updated their records.

Remember, reporting your educator's WWCCs is a requirement under Family Assistance Law. We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations, including issuing an infringement or a debt.

What you need to show us

You must report an educator's WWCC to us **within 7 days** of them starting at your service. The check must be:

- current
- as issued by the state or territory government
- obtained before the person started the position.

You must also report any changes to a WWCC **within 24 hours** of becoming aware of a change in status, including if a check:

- is renewed or extended
- is suspended or revoked
- has lapsed or expired.

If an educator does not have a current WWCC, or if you fail to report the check to us, any sessions of care provided by the educator will not be eligible for CCS.

Where it's required by state or territory law, you must also report details of any change in status to the relevant regulatory body.

How to report to us

You can report new and changed WWCCs via the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third party software.

We have a [task card](#) to help you with the PEP. If you use third party software, contact your software provider for help.

We have information on background checks [on our website](#).

Why we issue infringements

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.



Providers must make sure that they, their employees and educators follow the rules.

An infringement is a fine, like a parking ticket. Infringements are issued for a range of reasons, including:

- failure to keep contact details up to date
- failure to report fee information
- failure to submit session reports on time
- failure to provide notifications on time
- failure to keep records.

See the [list of FAL provisions for which we can issue an infringement](#).

See guidance about [what to do if you get an infringement](#).

Review [your obligations](#) to avoid an infringement.

For families

It's time to tell Services Australia your 2023–24 income estimate

If you get Child Care Subsidy (CCS), you must tell Services Australia your family income estimate for 2023–24.

This includes any income you think you'll get during the financial year.

Providing an accurate estimate:

- ensures you get the right amount of CCS
- reduces the risk of an overpayment.

You can provide your estimate via your Centrelink online account or the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app. Make sure you select 2023–24 before you start.

If your circumstances change during the year, you must update your estimate.

Find more information about [estimating your income](#).



From the department

COVID-19 measures ending soon

COVID-19 measures will end as planned on 30 June 2023.

The COVID-19 measures were designed to ensure Child Care Subsidy (CCS) continued to flow to families and services when restrictions made it difficult for families to attend care and services to remain open. Currently, restrictions are no longer being imposed.

The government is continuing to monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 cases and will re-consider its approach if needed.

Absences

We provided 10 extra allowable absences in 2021–22 and 2022–23 due to COVID-19.

All children will have up to 42 allowable absences in the 2023–24 financial year.

Families can use allowable absences to get CCS when their child is absent from care for any reason. Families can access additional absences once they have used their 42 allowable absence days, in [certain circumstances](#).

Families can continue to use evidence of a positive COVID-19 test result from a government agency or pathology service to access additional absences.

Gap fees

Currently, services may waive the gap fee if a child is unable to attend care for one of the following reasons:

- the child, or a member of their immediate household, has tested positive with COVID-19 in the last 7 days
- 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.

This provision will end on 30 June. From 1 July, services must charge the gap fee in the above circumstances.

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

Grant to set up services in areas of limited supply

We are inviting early childhood education and care providers to apply for a new grant opportunity.

Grants are for providers to set up new Centre Based Day Care services and Family Day Care premises:

- in disadvantaged regional and remote areas of Australia
- where there are no or limited such early childhood services.

Responses to queries received about the grant, including any clarifications, will be updated on the GrantConnect website. If you haven't already, please register to receive these updates.

Applications close on Thursday 1 June.



Learn more about the grant, including eligibility criteria, [on our website](#).

Apply on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

Changes to gap fee payments

From 1 July, families must pay the gap fee using electronic means. We've published new information regarding exceptions available in limited circumstances.

Electronic funds transfer, or EFT, is when a customer pays a bill using electronic means. We outline [typical EFT payment](#) methods on our website.

Most services already accept EFT payments. Similarly, over 98% of families already use EFT to pay their gap fee.

Exceptions

Exceptions will be available in limited circumstances, including for:

- individuals at risk of family or domestic violence
- services experiencing exceptional circumstances.

In both cases, a provider must apply on behalf of the individual or service seeking exception.

Find more details about these exceptions, including application forms, [on our website](#).

Keep families informed

We encourage you to remind families at your service about the changes to gap fee payments.

We have prepared [a kit you can download](#) and use.

It includes:

- a fact sheet you can print and distribute at your service
- a social media tile
- suggested copy for your newsletter, website and social media channels.

New financial reporting obligations for large providers

Large providers will soon have new financial reporting obligations.

From 1 July 2023, large providers must report financial information to the department, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that:

- operates 25 or more services
- shares operation of 25 or more services with another provider
- plans to operate or share operation of 25 or more services.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. You may have already received an email from us. Please check your provider-level email address for more information. Look for an email from ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au.



If you think these obligations apply to you but you haven't received an email, please contact ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au.

Learn more about the new obligations for large providers [on our website](#).

New Child Care Subsidy data now available

We've published new data about CCS in the September quarter 2022.

Each quarter we issue a summary report about CCS-approved care in Australia. The report includes data on child care usage, services, fees and subsidies in Australia.

Key findings from the September quarter 2022 include:

- 1,413,230 children from 990,760 families used CCS-approved care
- 14,217 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 26.6 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$11.20
- the Australian Government paid \$2.83 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [September quarter 2022 report](#).

Spotlight on the sector

Productivity Commission inquiry submissions close Friday

The first round of submissions to the Productivity Commission inquiry into the early childhood education and care (ECEC) system closes on Friday.

The Commission is examining how to make ECEC affordable and accessible. It will also:

- consider how to make it easier for people with young children to continue their careers
- assess the best support for young children to learn and develop
- look for the best ways to support families with special needs.

You can lodge your submission through the [Productivity Commission website](#).

You can also make a [brief comment on that website](#) at any time.

The Australian Government will receive the final report by 30 June 2024.

For more information about the inquiry, visit the [Productivity Commission website](#) or email childhood@pc.gov.au.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Reporting educator's working with children checks

Family Day Care and In Home Care providers have specific obligations regarding working with children checks (WWCCs).



You must report an educator's WWCC to us **within 7 days** of them starting at your service.

You must also report any changes to a WWCC **within 24 hours**, including if a check:

- is renewed or extended
- is suspended or revoked
- has lapsed or expired.

If an educator does not have a current WWCC, or if you fail to report the check to us, any sessions of care provided by the educator will not be eligible for CCS.

We can check the details of your educator's WWCCs, and we will be reviewing the status of reported checks in the coming weeks.

Reporting your educator's WWCC is a requirement under Family Assistance Law. We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations, including issuing an infringement or a debt.

Where it's required by state or territory law, you must also report details of any change in status to the relevant regulatory body.

What you need to report to us

You must provide details of the WWCC as issued by the state or territory government. The check must be:

- current
- obtained before the person started the position.

How to report to us

You can report new and changed WWCCs via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third party software.

We have a [task card](#) to help you with the PEP. If you use third party software, contact your software provider for help.

We have information on background checks [on our website](#).

Need a refresher on session reports?

You must submit accurate session reports on time – it's the law.

Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

You must submit session reports for all children enrolled at your service, even if a child is not eligible for CCS.

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

Find detailed guidance about submitting session reports [on our website](#).

Please update your contact information

You must keep your contact information up to date in the CCS System. If your contact information is incorrect or out of date, we cannot contact you.

Check your email and postal addresses are correct. Login via [PEP](#) or your third party software.



Supporting the workforce

Professional development opportunities to strengthen workforce

New measures will help support the skills and training of ECEC educators by expanding access to quality professional development.

The **professional development** subsidy will help up to 75,000 qualified early childhood educators to gain additional training.

The **paid practicum subsidy** will help up to 6,000 early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications.

The **practicum exchange** will help up to 2,000 early childhood teachers in training to complete a professional exchange program to give them broader practical experience before qualification.

[Read more about the workforce measures.](#)

[Read the ministers' media release on the 2023–24 Education Budget.](#)

For families

ACCC inquiry into ECEC prices: survey of families

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) wants to hear from parents and guardians to understand how you decide to use or not to use early childhood education and care (ECEC) services.

If your family has children aged 0 to 14 years or has children with a disability aged 0 to 18 years, the ACCC would like you to complete an online survey.

The ACCC strongly encourages the following to take part:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families
- families from different cultural backgrounds
- parents and guardians of children with a disability or with complex needs.

This information will help to identify the issues that affect the use of ECEC services in Australia.

The survey is open until 31 May. You can complete it anonymously.

Have your say here: <https://consultation.accc.gov.au/accc/parents-and-guardians-childcare-survey/>

For more information, [visit the ACCC website.](#)



From the department

What the Budget means for ECEC

The Australian Government announced increased funding to target fraud and non-compliance against the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and greater support for at-risk children under early childhood education and care (ECEC) measures in last night's Budget.

Ahead of the Budget, the Government announced measures to address the challenges facing the ECEC workforce.

Integrity measures

The Treasurer, the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, last night announced the government would provide \$22.2 million to increase activities that reinforce and safeguard the CCS against fraud and non-compliance.

The savings will come from preventing CCS payments going to non-compliant providers and from stopping fraudulent claims.

Improving access for at-risk children

The government will also spend \$2.8 million to simplify and streamline access to Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing from October 2023.

The measure will:

- consolidate service delivery within Services Australia
- allow additional circumstances to extend backdating of applications to up to 13 weeks
- reduce double handling of applications resulting in efficiencies for providers and the risk of gaps in entitlement to the subsidy.

The additional circumstances for extended backdating will include:

- children in formal foster care arrangements
- families experiencing homelessness
- families affected by drug or alcohol abuse.

We will consult with stakeholders to refine this language before implementation.

Currently, extended backdating is available where:

- a family is affected by domestic or family violence
- a family is experiencing serious illness, a medical condition, or hospitalisation
- a family is experiencing serious mental health issues
- a child is on a long-term protection order.

ECEC workforce measures

Last week, we announced 3 other measures ahead of the Budget to support the ECEC workforce. Funding for the measures totals \$72.4 million, from 2023–24 to 2026–27.



The measures were:

- The **professional development subsidy**, which will help up to 75,000 qualified early childhood educators to gain additional training. This will cost \$34.4 million.
- The **paid practicum subsidy**, which will help up to 6,000 early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete tertiary qualifications. This will cost \$33.1 million.
- The **practicum exchange**, which will help up to 2,000 early childhood teachers in training to complete a professional exchange program to give them broader practical experience before qualification. This will cost \$4.8 million.

[Read more about the workforce measures.](#)

[Read the Ministers' media release on the 2023–24 Education Budget.](#)

Child Care Subsidy changes approaching

There are two months until the changes to CCS occur.

We have detailed information about what's changing for providers that administer CCS [on our website](#).

You can help families understand what the changes mean for them. Do this by:

- directing families to the CCS calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to find out what their future rates may be
- printing and displaying a [poster](#) and [fact sheet](#) at your service
- sharing social media with your families [using this kit](#)
- telling your families when the CCS changes will take effect with regard to your service's billing practices.

Families can get more information on the [Services Australia website](#).

Changes to the activity test from July 2023

From 10 July 2023, there are changes to the CCS activity test for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

A family's activity level affects the amount of CCS they can get.

The changes mean families can get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. This is regardless of their family's activity level.

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

Spotlight on the sector

Latest National Quality Framework Snapshot released

The proportion of ECEC services meeting or exceeding quality standards remains at 89%, according to the latest National Quality Framework (NQF) Snapshot from ACECQA.

The snapshot provides an overview of the ECEC sector, including the progress and results of quality assessment and rating against the National Quality Standard (NQS).

[Read the latest NQF Snapshot on ACECQA's website.](#)



Facts from Family Assistance Law

Make sure your details are up to date

You must keep your contact details, including email addresses, [up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System](#).

You must also identify all [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) in the system and keep their information up to date.

Update your details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

For families

Have your say on future of ECEC

The Productivity Commission wants your ideas on how to improve Australia's early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

The Commission is looking into how to make ECEC affordable and accessible. It will consider how to make it easier for people with young children to continue their careers. It will assess the best support for young children to learn and to develop. It will look for the best ways to support families with special needs.

The first round of submissions closes on 19 May 2023. You can lodge your submission through the [Productivity Commission website](#).

You can also make a [brief comment on that website](#) at any time.

The Commission will release its draft report in November 2023. You will be able to comment on the draft, too.

The Australian Government will receive the final report by 30 June 2024.

For more information about the inquiry, visit the [Productivity Commission website](#) or email childhood@pc.gov.au.



From the department

New professional development opportunities for ECEC workforce

The Australian Government today announced that the 2023–24 Budget will include measures to support the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce.

These are designed to:

- strengthen skills and professional experience
- improve retention
- build supply
- increase capacity.

The **professional development subsidy** will help up to 75,000 qualified early childhood educators to gain additional training.

The **paid practicum subsidy** will help up to 6,000 early childhood teachers in training with paid placements to complete their tertiary qualifications.

The **practicum exchange** will help up to 2,000 early childhood teachers in training to complete a professional exchange program that will give them broader practical experience prior to qualification.

In 2023–24, these measures are being fast-tracked with grants opening from July 2023. The priority in 2023–24 will be for particular groups including First Nations services and educators and services in regional and remote locations.

Funding for the 3 measures is \$72.4 million from 2023–24 to 2026–27.

[Find out more about the new early childhood workforce measures.](#)

New grant for services in areas of limited supply

We are inviting Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved ECEC providers to apply for a new grant opportunity.

Grants are available to establish new Centre Based Day Care and Family Day Care services:

- in disadvantaged regional and remote areas of Australia
- where there are no or limited such services.

Learn more about the grant, including eligibility criteria, [on our website](#).

Apply on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

Restricted grant under review

We are conducting an independent review of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) restricted grant.

The review will examine if the grant is:

- improving early childhood development outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children



- increasing workforce participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

More information is available [on our website](#).

The provider approval process is changing soon

We're making it simpler to apply to become an ECEC provider.

From July 2023, prospective providers can apply for CCS and National Law approval in one place.

Providers need both approvals to operate an ECEC service that offers CCS.

Currently, prospective providers must prepare and submit each application via separate platforms. From July, providers can submit both applications through the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#) (NQA ITS).

Applications can be assessed by state and territory regulatory authorities and the Australian Government at the same time.

The streamlined process will also apply to existing providers applying for a new service.

There will also be a new e-learning course to help applicants understand their obligations before they apply.

These changes will reduce the administrative burden on applicants and streamline assessment.

[Read more about the changes on our website](#). You can also watch a [short video about the changes](#) on ACECQA's website.

Plus, [subscribe to our newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#) to stay up to date with the changes.

If you're applying before July 2023, find instructions on the current application process [on our website](#).

Changes to gap fee payments

From 1 July, families must pay the gap fee using electronic means.

Electronic funds transfer, or EFT, is when a customer pays a bill using electronic means. We outline [typical EFT payment methods](#) on our website.

Most services already accept EFT payments. Similarly, over 98% of families already use EFT to pay their gap fee.

This change will help us protect CCS against fraud and non-compliance.

How will we check payments?

The department will audit this measure from 1 July. We'll check EFT payments against provider, service or educator bank statements and receipts. We'll also check any relevant reports if you use third-party software.

We may ask you to provide information [using a section 158 notice](#). [A person with management or control of the provider](#) (PMC) must respond to this notice.

We may take compliance action if:

- you fail to comply with the new requirements
- you do not respond to a section 158 notice, or
- your PMC details are not correct in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).



Compliance action could include:

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

We'll also share information and data obtained through audits with the Australian Taxation Office. This will ensure providers getting government payments are meeting their tax and superannuation obligations.

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

Spotlight on the sector

ECEC jobs showcase

Our Workforce Taskforce and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) will host a webinar next Tuesday about working in the ECEC sector.

The webinar will:

- highlight the experience and insight of experts
- cover opportunities and career pathways
- provide advice on how to begin a career in the sector with fee-free training opportunities.

Learn more, and register on [DEWR's website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Understanding overpayments and debts

You may sometimes receive more CCS than families at your service are entitled to. This is known as an overpayment.

Overpayments generally occur when a provider withdraws or changes a session report, such as amending to record fewer hours of care.

If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to pay back the difference. This is called offsetting. You can see if offsetting has occurred in your payment advice in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

The best way to avoid an overpayment is to [submit accurate and timely session reports](#).

We also issue debt notices in certain circumstances.

You may receive a debt notice if you:

- change a session of care to fewer hours or days
- withdraw a session report
- act in a non-compliant way
- close or transfer ownership of a service retrospectively



- cease operating your service while offsetting is occurring.

Find out more about avoiding overpayments and what to do if you get a debt notice [on our website](#).

Applying for ACCS child wellbeing

Providers play an important role in connecting families to Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing.

Providers give families access to ACCS child wellbeing by:

- giving a certificate, or
- applying for a determination.

You can give certificates and apply for determinations via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Giving a certificate

A child wellbeing certificate is generally the first step in gaining access to the subsidy.

The decision to give a certificate lies with the provider. A certificate gives a family immediate access to the subsidy for up to 6 weeks.

Learn more about [giving a child wellbeing certificate](#).

Applying for a determination

If you believe the child will continue to be at risk after the 6-week certificate period ends, you can apply for a determination from Services Australia.

In most cases, a determination provides further access to the subsidy for up to 13 weeks. In some cases, such as for foster children, you can apply for up to 52 weeks.

Learn more about [applying for a child wellbeing determination](#).

For families

Child Care Subsidy is changing from July

From 10 July, there are changes to the way Services Australia works out your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlement. This means your family's CCS may increase.

If you already get CCS, you don't need to do anything to get the increased rate. Services Australia will apply these changes for you from 10 July 2023.

You can use the [Child Care Subsidy Calculator](#) at [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to see what your CCS may be and how much you may pay for child care.



From the department

Help families understand CCS changes

Families can now use the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au to see what their subsidy rates may be from 10 July.

Most families will get more subsidy. Some families previously not eligible will be able to get it.

Make sure your families understand what the changes mean for them. Do this by:

- directing families to the CCS Calculator at StartingBlocks.gov.au
- printing and displaying a [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service
- sharing social media with your families [using this kit](#)
- telling your families when the CCS changes will take effect with regard to your service's billing practices.

We've published updated information about what the changes mean for providers that administer CCS. Go to our [family eligibility and entitlement page](#).

CCS: balancing deadlines approaching

Families must confirm what they earned in 2021–22 and 2020–21 by 30 June to avoid losing CCS or incurring a debt.

At the end of each financial year, Services Australia compares a family's income estimate with their actual income to check they got the right amount of CCS. This process is called balancing.

Families need to confirm their income for balancing to occur. There are deadlines for families to do this.

Next deadlines

The end of financial year marks two important deadlines for families:

- first deadline for confirming 2021–22 income
- second deadline for confirming 2020–21 income.

If a family misses the first deadline, their CCS will stop.

If a family misses the second deadline, they will lose their CCS eligibility and may have to repay any CCS they got for that financial year.

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. See the article below under "For families" to share with families at your service.

We have more information for providers [on our website](#).



Families should go to the [Services Australia website](#).

Give feedback on Inclusion Support Program

We are conducting an independent review into the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) and we're asking for your views.

From today, services will receive an ISP review survey link, sent via email. It will come from Deloitte Access Economics who we've commissioned to review the program.

This survey will help us understand your experiences accessing and delivering support through the ISP. It will also ask for your feedback on how to improve the program.

This survey can be completed by any staff member or volunteer at an ECEC service, including:

- approved providers
- centre directors
- early childhood teachers and educators
- other staff members at the service.

Survey responses will be de-identified to ensure confidentiality. The survey closes 14 May.

In addition to this survey, Deloitte will be selecting services to participate in focus group sessions.

If you have any questions about the survey, contact ISPReview@deloitte.com.au.

If you have any questions about the Inclusion Support Program review, email ihc-ispprogramreviews@education.gov.au.

Get the latest from our website

Our [website](#) is the best place to get the latest information about early childhood education and care (ECEC) policies and programs.

The [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) was developed for the introduction of the Child Care Package in July 2018. The Australian Government is making significant changes to ECEC policies and programs.

Get the latest changes, updates and advice from [our website](#).

We've updated the handbook to identify the relevant web pages at the start of each chapter.

You should also:

- [subscribe to get our weekly newsletter](#)
- [join our Facebook Group for Australian Child Care Providers and Services](#).

Spotlight on the sector

New transportation rules

New transportation rules were implemented on 1 March for centre-based services that provide regular transportation.



Transportation of children can present increased risks to safety of children, when they get in or out of vehicles, and when they arrive at or leave a service - with significant consequences.

Providers with centre-based services that provide regular transportation are reminded that [persons with management or control](#) have these new obligations:

- ensuring that a staff member or nominated supervisor, who is not the driver, accounts for and makes a record of children as they get in or out of a vehicle at a service
- ensuring records are made confirming a completed check of the inside of a vehicle at the service, after all children have left to ensure no children remain
- notifying the regulatory authority when your service starts providing or arranging regular transport, and again when your service finishes providing or arranging transport, which can be done via the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#).

If you do not meet these requirements, you will incur a fine of at least \$2,000.

Further details are available on [ACECQAs website](#).

Early learning frameworks updated

***Belonging, Being and Becoming* and *My Time, Our Place* have been updated to reflect contemporary practices and contain new principles and clearer guidance for educators.**

The updates strengthen the frameworks' connection with the National Quality Standard on:

- transitions
- sustainability
- theoretical approaches
- critical reflection
- inclusion
- the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing.

Providers, services and educators are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the frameworks and begin incorporating them into their programs and practices. They will become mandatory in early 2024.

[Visit the ACECQA website](#) to:

- download the frameworks
- read more about the updates
- learn more about the transition process.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Enrolment process

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS payments. There are 4 steps in the enrolment process.

Step 1: The family must first lodge a CCS claim via their [Centrelink online account](#). Families should do this before their child starts at your service.



Step 2: The provider and the family then agree on care arrangements for the child. Families must agree to the care arrangements in writing. They can do this electronically or in hard copy. Care arrangements can cover more than one child attending the same service.

Step 3: Once the care arrangement has been established, the provider submits an enrolment notice in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#) (CCSS). You must submit an enrolment notice for each child covered by the arrangement. You must do this within 7 days after the end of the week in which you made the agreement.

Step 4: Once you've submitted an enrolment notice, the family will be prompted to confirm the enrolment via their [Centrelink online account](#). CCS payments will not start until the enrolment is confirmed.

Find out more about the enrolment process [on our website](#).

For families

Balancing CCS payments at end of financial year

At the end of the financial year, which is 30 June, Services Australia compares your income estimate with your actual income to check you got the right amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This is called balancing.

You need to confirm your family's income before Services Australia can balance your payments. There are deadlines.

One year after the financial year ends

You have one year to confirm your income.

If you don't confirm your income within 12 months after the end of a financial year your CCS will stop and you'll have to pay full fees for child care.

If you got CCS for 2021–22 you have until 30 June 2023 to confirm your income.

Two years after the financial year ends

If you still haven't confirmed your income two years after a financial year ends you may have to repay any CCS you received for that financial year.

If you haven't confirmed your income for 2020–21 you must do so by 30 June 2023.

How to confirm income

Confirm your income by:

lodging your tax return, or

[telling Services Australia that you don't need to lodge](#), even if you've already told the Australian Taxation Office.

Learn more about the balancing process on the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

New reporting obligations for large providers

Large providers have new financial reporting obligations from July.

From 1 July, large providers must report financial information to us, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that:

- operates 25 or more services
- shares operation of 25 or more services with another provider
- plans to operate or share operation of 25 or more services.

Providers are considered to share operations if:

- both providers have at least 25% of [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) in common
- one provider owns 15% or more of the other
- one provider is entitled to receive 15% or more of any dividends paid by another provider.

This information will help us:

- assess the financial viability of large providers
- improve the transparency of child care costs
- protect the government's investment in the sector.

We're contacting large providers directly with more details about what they need to do. Make sure your provider-level email address is up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

Learn more about the new obligations for large providers [on our website](#).

Privacy and safeguarding information

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) providers must comply with Australian laws to safeguard the sensitive information to which they have access.

Access to the information of families and children comes with responsibility and a duty of care. Ensure appropriate care is taken to protect your families and your service.

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner has published guidance and advice on good privacy practice, including a [guide targeted at not-for-profit organisations](#).

CCS Helpdesk closed on Anzac Day

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed next Tuesday for the Anzac Day public holiday.

The helpdesk will re-open at 10am AEST on Wednesday.



You can contact the helpdesk anytime [by email](#) and we will respond during business hours.

You may experience short delays in Child Care Subsidy payments due to the public holiday.

Spotlight on the sector

Consultation continues on the Early Years Strategy

Community roundtables are being held across Australia as part of the consultation process for the development of the Early Years Strategy

Earlier this month, Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, hosted a roundtable in Sorell, Tasmania, where she met with local ECEC services and heard from early years experts and advocates.

Community roundtables are part of the broader stakeholder engagement process for the strategy. The next roundtables will be held in Adelaide, South Australia and Gosford, New South Wales.

The strategy will guide Australian Government early years policies and programs for the next decade to ensure children aged 5 and below have the best start in life.

You can have your say on the discussion paper for the proposed strategy on [the Department of Social Services website](#). Submissions close 30 April.

Facts from Family Assistance Law

What to do when buying a service

A provider buying a service must apply for CCS approval for that service. You cannot transfer approval from one provider to another.

This task can only be performed by a [PMC](#).

A provider seeking CCS approval for a purchased service should apply as many weeks as possible before the date of purchase. The application for CCS approval can be submitted before the National Law service approval has been transferred.

[Find step-by-step guidance on applying for CCS approval on our website.](#)

Are you submitting session reports on time?

You must submit accurate and timely session reports – it's the law.

Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

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

You must submit session reports for all children enrolled at your service, even if a child is not eligible for CCS.

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



For families

ACCC ECEC price inquiry: survey of families

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) wants to hear from parents and guardians to understand what influences their choice on whether or not to use ECEC services.

All families with children aged 0 to 14 years, or with children with a disability aged 0 to 18 years, are invited to complete the ACCC online survey.

In particular, the ACCC encourages the following to take part:

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families

families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

parents and guardians of children with a disability or with complex needs.

Feedback will help provide a complete picture of the issues impacting the price and availability of ECEC services in Australia.

The survey is open until 31 May 2023 and can be completed anonymously.

Please share this link with the families using your service - directly and via your social media accounts: <https://consultation.accc.gov.au/accc/parents-and-guardians-childcare-survey/>

For more information about the ACCC price inquiry, visit the [ACCC website](#).



Tropical Cyclone Ilsa in Western Australia: period of emergency declared

We've declared a period of emergency in Port Hedland, Western Australia, following Tropical Cyclone Ilsa.

The period of emergency applies from 13 to 14 April 2023 for early childhood education and care services and families in the Town of Port Hedland local government area.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates 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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [wa.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 [WA State Emergency Service](#) for current emergency information.



From the department

Child Care Subsidy is changing soon

From 10 July, most families using early childhood education and care will get more Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Some families previously not eligible for CCS will become eligible.

Here's what you need to know:

- The family income limit to get CCS is increasing from \$356,756 to \$530,000.
- The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children, if they earn below \$362,408.

Help your families understand what's changing by displaying this [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service.

- Families can find out more by:
- visiting the [Services Australia website](#)
- subscribing to the [Raising Kids news update](#)
- following the [Family Update Facebook page](#).

Activity test changes from July

From 10 July 2023, there are changes to the CCS activity test for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

A family's activity level affects the amount of CCS they can get.

Families will be able to get a minimum of 36 hours subsidised care per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care, regardless of their activity level.

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

Make sure you're [getting our emails](#) and join our [Facebook group](#) so you don't miss any updates.

When to use a provider eligible arrangement

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing is for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect. Families must be eligible for CCS to get ACCS.

In rare cases, you may not be able to identify a CCS-eligible parent or carer for a child at risk.

If this happens, you – the provider – may be able to get the subsidy on behalf of the child. This is known as a provider eligible arrangement or 'PEA'.



A PEA enables Services Australia to pay the subsidy directly to you. It can only be used in very limited circumstances.

The most common reasons to use a PEA are:

- when a child is at risk but their parent or carer does not meet the CCS [residence rules](#)
- for children in formal foster care, for up to 13 weeks.

Where parents do not meet CCS residency rules, you must first email childwellbeing@education.gov.au before creating a PEA. We will confirm if you are eligible to enrol the child under a PEA.

When using a PEA, the child must still meet the CCS [immunisation requirements](#).

If the child does not meet the immunisation requirements, or their immunisation status is unknown, you must [complete this form](#) and email it to childwellbeing@education.gov.au. We will then determine if the child can receive the subsidy based on the circumstances.

Find detailed guidance about [when and how to use a PEA](#) on our website.

Reminder: don't refer families to helpdesk

We remind you the CCS Helpdesk provides support to approved providers and services only.

Of late, we've been receiving a high volume of enquiries from families. You can help us by not referring family inquiries to us.

Families can find information about CCS and ACCS on the [Services Australia website](#). Families can also subscribe to [news for families](#) or follow the [Family Update Facebook page](#) to stay up to date.

Families who have questions should [contact Services Australia](#).

If a family believes a child care service is doing something illegal or fraudulent, they can contact the tip-off line on 1800 664 231 or tipoffline@education.gov.au.

Spotlight on the sector

Services must adhere to new transportation rules or face penalties

New transportation rules were implemented on 1 March for centre-based services that provide regular transportation.

Transportation of children can present increased risks to safety of children, when they get in or out of vehicles, and when they arrive at or leave a service—with significant consequences.

Providers with centre-based services that provide regular transportation are reminded that [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) have these new obligations:

- ensuring that a staff member or nominated supervisor, who is not the driver, accounts for and makes a record of children as they get in or out of a vehicle at a service
- ensuring records are made confirming a completed check of the inside of a vehicle at the service, after all children have left to ensure no children remain



- notifying the regulatory authority when your service starts providing or arranging regular transport, and again when your service finishes providing or arranging transport, which can be done via the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#).

If you do not meet these requirements, you will incur a fine of at least \$2,000.

Further details are available on [ACECQA's website](#).

Facts from Family Assistance Law

Report selling a service

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

A provider selling a service must notify us that it will be ceasing to operate that service.

This task can only be performed by a [PMC](#).

You must report at least 42 days before the intended date of sale.

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

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.

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.

Most providers comply with the law and do the right thing. However, where certain rules are not being followed, we can use infringements to help change provider behaviour.

An [infringement](#) is a fine, like a parking ticket. 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 are issued for:

- failure to keep contact details up to date
- failure to report fee information
- failure to submit session reports on time
- failure to provide notifications on time
- failure to keep records.

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

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

Read about what to do if you get an infringement [on our website](#).



Plus, check out our [information on your obligations](#) to avoid an infringement.

For families

Finding the most suitable ECEC service for your child

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

On the Starting Blocks website, you can:

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

Visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to start searching.



From the department

Funding for 4 new services for First Nations children

Four new early childhood education and care (ECEC) services will be set up in remote locations under a wider \$29.9 million expansion of the Community Child Care Fund restricted program.

The services, in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland, will each support 20 to 50 First Nations children to access high quality culturally appropriate ECEC.

The expansion is part of our commitment to achieving [Closing the Gap targets](#). The aim is to increase participation rates of First Nations children in ECEC settings.

[Read the announcement on the new sites.](#)

[Read more about the CCCF restricted program.](#)

What to do if your ACCS child wellbeing application was rejected

Unlike other subsidies, providers apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing on behalf of a family. Here's what you need to know if your application has been rejected.

If your application was rejected, you can view the rejection reason in the outcome letter within the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You can also see the agency that assessed your application.

If you'd like more information about why it was rejected, contact the appropriate team:

- Email ACCS.CWB.Review@servicesaustralia.gov.au if the application was assessed by Services Australia.
- Email childwellbeing@education.gov.au if the application was assessed by our department.

Find more information about ACCS child wellbeing [on our website](#).

CCS Helpdesk closed

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed on Friday and next Monday for the holiday period.

The helpdesk will reopen at 9 am AEST next Tuesday.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime [by email](#) and we will respond during business hours.

Spotlight on the sector

Review of two ECEC programs

We are conducting independent reviews into two ECEC programs.

The review into the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) will examine access to, affordability of, and quality of ISP services. It will provide evidence-based findings to inform consideration of accessibility, future investment and policy settings.



[More information about the review into the ISP is available on our website.](#)

We are also conducting an independent review of the In Home Care (IHC) program.

The purpose of the review is to ensure the program:

- is meeting its policy intent and objectives
- supports the Australian Government's commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and families accessing early childhood education and care.

The review will examine access to, affordability of, and quality of IHC services. It will provide evidence-based findings to inform consideration of accessibility, future investment and policy settings.

[More information about the IHC program is available on our website.](#)

Wellbeing at work matters

Get started with [Be You](#), the national mental health and wellbeing initiative for learning communities in Australia.

Be You helps services support the mental health and wellbeing of educators. This is important for staff retention, job satisfaction, and productivity.

Be You has released a guide that encourages leaders to think about educator wellbeing as a shared responsibility, and to:

- consider factors that contribute to educator wellbeing
- rethink the roles individual educators play
- consider steps learning communities can take for building a thriving workplace.

[Download Beyond Self-Care: An Educator Wellbeing Guide on the Be You website.](#)

Facts from FAL

Report change of provider's legal entity

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

You must report any change to a provider's legal entity due to:

- business restructure
- sale
- transfer of ownership

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

You must report at least 42 days before the intended restructure, sale or transfer date. Report through your third-party software or the [PEP](#).

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.



For families

Productivity Commission ECEC inquiry: call for submissions

The Productivity Commission has called for submissions for its inquiry into Australia’s early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

Initial submissions are due by 19 May 2023 and can be made through [the Productivity Commission website](#). The Commission will also seek submissions after it releases its draft report in late November 2023.

You can also make [a brief comment](#) at any time.

The inquiry will make recommendations to support affordable, accessible, equitable and high-quality ECEC that reduces barriers to workforce participation and supports children’s learning and development.

The inquiry began on 1 March 2023. The Commission will provide its final report to the Australian Government by 30 June 2024.

For questions about the inquiry, and how to participate visit [the Productivity Commission website](#) or email childhood@pc.gov.au.



From the department

Services must adhere to new transportation rules or face penalties

New transportation rules were implemented on 1 March for centre-based services that provide regular transportation.

Transportation of children can present increased risks to safety of children, when they get in or out of vehicles, and when they arrive at or leave a service—with significant consequences.

Providers with centre-based services that provide regular transportation are reminded that [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) have these new obligations:

- ensuring that a staff member or nominated supervisor, who is not the driver, accounts for and makes a record of children as they get in or out of a vehicle at a service
- ensuring records are made confirming a completed check of the inside of a vehicle at the service, after all children have left to ensure no children remain
- notifying the regulatory authority when your service starts providing or arranging regular transport, and again when your service finishes providing or arranging transport, which can be done via the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#).

If you do not meet these requirements you will incur a financial penalty of at least \$2,000.

Further details are available on [ACECQA's website](#).

Changes to CCS from July 2023

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is changing from July. Most families using child care will get more subsidy. Some families previously not eligible for CCS will now get it.

Help your families understand what's changing by displaying this [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service.

Families can stay up to date by:

- visiting the [Services Australia website](#)
- subscribing to news for families at servicesaustralia.gov.au/news
- following the [Family Update Facebook page](#).

Establishing eligibility for ACCS child wellbeing

If you identify a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect at your service, they may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(ACCS\) child wellbeing](#).

Unlike other subsidies, providers apply for ACCS child wellbeing on behalf of a family. There are important steps to take to ensure the family can get the subsidy.

You must:



- Discuss the requirement for the family to lodge a CCS claim as early as possible, if they haven't already. Families must be eligible for CCS to get ACCS.
- Ensure the family is aware of the CCS [immunisation requirements](#). If a child does not meet the immunisation requirements, the claim will not be approved. The family will need to make a new claim once the child has met the immunisation requirements.

Services Australia can only backdate payments up to 28 days before the family lodged their successful CCS claim. Families may miss out on payments if they delay.

In the rare case that you cannot identify a CCS-eligible parent or carer, you – the provider – may be able to get the subsidy on behalf of the child. This is known as a provider eligible arrangement or 'PEA'.

A PEA enables Services Australia to pay the subsidy directly to you. It can only be used in very limited circumstances.

Find detailed guidance on establishing eligibility for ACCS child wellbeing [on our website](#).

June quarter 2022 report released

We've published the latest data on early childhood education and care in the June quarter 2022.

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

- the number of children and families using approved care
- the number and types of approved services
- the cost of care
- total government subsidies.

Key findings

Overall, 1,414,980 million children from approximately 1 million families attended a CCS approved service. Of these, 1,356,550 million children were eligible for CCS.

48% of children aged 0 to 5 years and 33% of children aged 0 to 12 years used approved care. On average, children attended care for 25.9 hours per week.

The government paid \$2.64 billion in Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.

The average hourly fee across all care types, excluding In Home Care, was \$10.90. This was a 4.6% increase from the June quarter 2021.

Go to the June quarter 2022 report [on our website](#).

Review into Inclusion Support Program

We are conducting an independent review of the Inclusion Support Program.

The review will examine access to, affordability of, and quality of ISP services. It will provide evidence-based findings to inform consideration of accessibility, future investment and policy settings.

[More information is available on our website.](#)

Review into In Home Care program

We are also conducting an independent review of the In Home Care (IHC) program.



The purpose of the review is to ensure the program is:

- meeting its policy intent and objectives
- supports the Australian Government's commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and families accessing early childhood education and care.

The review will examine access to, affordability of, and quality of IHC services. It will provide evidence-based findings to inform consideration of accessibility, future investment and policy settings.

[More information is available on our website.](#)

Spotlight on the sector

Have your say on draft ECEC national vision

What reforms would you like to see made to the early childhood education and care (ECEC) system?

Federal, state and territory education and early years ministers are developing an ECEC national vision.

We have released the [draft vision](#), and we're seeking your feedback.

The vision aims to drive future reform of the sector. It recognises:

- Quality ECEC has learning and development benefits for children in the most formative period of their lives. This can be especially significant for children from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.
- An affordable and accessible ECEC system supports parents to work and study, especially women. This in turn supports the Australian economy to grow and prosper.

Consultation closes on 7 April.

[Read more about the draft national vision for ECEC on our website.](#)

You can take part by [completing an online survey](#) or by [making a written submission](#).

Upskill your workforce with fee-free training

Educators play a vital role in laying the foundations for children's learning and development. Support your educators to upskill and gain qualifications without tuition fees.

Fee-free TAFE can provide future educators with the benefit of no tuition fees and employment opportunities in an in-demand sector.

Courses are available in every state and territory. Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care being a popular entry-level course.

Visit [Your Career](#) for more on eligibility and enrolling in a fee-free course.

Rural and remote forum: that's a wrap





This year, we were again proud sponsors of the Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA) Rural and Remote Forum.

The three-day program, held in Mudgee, New South Wales, included an address from Assistant Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm.

CCSA, a peak early childhood education and care body, hosted 300 attendees, promoting professional development, networking and team building for service providers in rural and remote areas.

Facts from FAL

Report financial administration events

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

You must report the following financial administration events:

- entering administration
- receivership
- liquidation
- bankruptcy.

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

You must report within 24 hours of the financial administration event. Report through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (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.



Need a refresher on enrolments?

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS payments.

Services Australia can only pay CCS if:

a child's enrolment notice correctly identifies the person who made the CCS claim, and the family has confirmed the enrolment.

Review the information [on our website](#) and make sure you're following the correct process.

For families

Gap fee payments from July

From 1 July 2023, you must pay the gap fee using electronic means.

Electronic funds transfer, or EFT, is when a customer pays a bill using electronic means. Typical EFT payment methods include:

- bank or credit card, including mobile wallets
- direct deposit or bank transfer, including PayID
- online payment systems through third party software
- BPAY or [Centrepay](#).

Most families already use EFT to pay their gap fee.

If you cannot use EFT, you might be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) (ACCS). ACCS may cover all of a child's child care fees.

The Australian Government also provides support to individuals and families navigating financial crises, stress or hardship. Check out the following free, confidential support services:

- [Emergency Relief](#)
- [Commonwealth Financial Counselling](#)
- [Financial Resilience](#) programs, including No Interest Loans Scheme and Saver Plus
- [Escaping Violence Payment](#)
- [Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot](#).



From the department

Changes to gap fee payments

Families using child care must pay the gap fee using electronic means from 1 July 2023.

Electronic funds transfer, or EFT, is when a customer pays a bill using electronic means. Typical EFT payment methods include:

- bank or credit card, including mobile wallets
- direct deposit or bank transfer, including PayID
- online payment systems through third-party software
- BPAY or Centrepay.

This change will help us protect Child Care Subsidy (CCS) against fraud and non-compliance.

Most services already accept EFT payments. Similarly, over 98% of families already use EFT to pay their gap fee.

Exemptions will apply in limited circumstances. We will provide more information about exemptions soon. We'll also develop some materials you can use to communicate this measure to families.

Find detailed information about the changes and what you need to do [on our website](#).

New reporting obligations for large providers

From 1 July 2023, large providers will have new financial reporting obligations.

Large providers must report financial information to the department, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that:

- operates 25 or more services
- shares operation of 25 or more services with another provider
- plans to operate or share operation of 25 or more services.

We're contacting large providers directly. We'll let you know what you'll need to report and how to report. Make sure your provider-level email address is up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your-third party software.

Learn more about the new obligations for large providers [on our website](#).

Spotlight on the sector

Consultation opens on draft national vision for ECEC

Federal, state and territory education and early years ministers are developing a national long-term vision to drive future reform of the sector.



The draft national vision recognises:

- Quality ECEC has learning and development benefits for children in the most formative period of their lives. This can be especially significant for children from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.
- An affordable and accessible ECEC system supports parents to work and study, especially women. This in turn supports the Australian economy to grow and prosper.

Consultation is open until 7 April 2023.

[Read more about the draft national vision for ECEC on our website.](#)

You can take part by completing an online survey or by making a written submission.

- [Complete survey](#)
- [Make submission](#)

Facts from FAL

Keep your bank account details up to date

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

You must ensure bank account details for all services are up to date and correct.

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

You must report changes to bank details as soon as reasonably possible 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.

For families

Understanding Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) helps with the cost of approved child care.

Find information about CCS on the [Services Australia website](#).

Looking for information in your language? Service Australia has fact sheets in [14 different languages](#).



From the department

Changes to CCS from July 2023

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is changing from July. Most families using child care will get more subsidy. Some families previously not eligible for CCS will now get it.

Help your families understand what's changing by displaying this [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service.

Families can stay up to date by:

- visiting the [Services Australia website](#)
- subscribing to news for families at servicesaustralia.gov.au/news
- following the [Family Update Facebook page](#).

Identifying children at risk

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing is for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect. Providers play an important role in identifying children who may be at risk and connecting families to ACCS.

A child is considered at risk if they are exposed to:

- serious physical, emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- domestic or family violence
- neglect.

A child is also considered at risk if they:

- are likely to experience any of the above in the future
- are in formal foster care or formal kinship placement
- have been identified as being at risk under state or territory child protection law.

If you identify a child at risk, you should first have a conversation with the family.

Engaging with vulnerable families can:

- prevent issues from escalating
- help them feel included in the process
- help them understand the benefits of the subsidy
- ensure they're aware of available support services and agencies.

Find detailed guidance on [identifying children at risk](#) and [talking to families](#) on our website. We also outline the steps for providers who wish to apply for [ACCS child wellbeing](#).



Federal and state education departments

Wondering what the difference is between us and state and territory departments of education?

As the Australian Government Department of Education, we're responsible for administering CCS and ensuring providers comply with Family Assistance Law.

[Learn more about what we do.](#)

State and territory governments are responsible for the health, safety, wellbeing, and educational outcomes of children. State-based education departments, also known as regulatory authorities, do this under National Law through the National Quality Framework.

[Find your state or territory regulatory authority.](#)

Are your fee and vacancy details up to date?

Did you know your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are published on the Starting Blocks website?

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

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

Spotlight on the sector

Productivity Commission ECEC inquiry: call for submissions

The Productivity Commission has called for submissions for its inquiry into Australia's early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

Initial submissions are due by 19 May 2023 and can be made through the [Productivity Commission website](#). The Commission will also seek submissions after it releases its draft report in late November 2023.

You can also [make a brief comment](#) at any time.

The inquiry will make recommendations to support affordable, accessible, equitable and high-quality ECEC that reduces barriers to workforce participation and supports children's learning and development.

The inquiry began on 1 March 2023. The Commission will provide its final report to the Australian Government by 30 June 2024.

For questions about the inquiry, and how to participate [visit the Productivity Commission website](#) or email childhood@pc.gov.au.

Have your say on the Early Years Strategy

Public consultation is open to inform the development of the National Early Years Strategy.

The strategy will provide a road map for early years policies and programs across the Commonwealth for the next decade to ensure children aged 5 and below have the best start in life.

The Australian Government has released a discussion paper and is inviting public submissions as part of the stakeholder engagement process for the strategy.



Read the discussion paper on the [Early Years Strategy consultation website](#).

Have your say:

- [make a submission](#)
- [take the survey](#).

Have your say on gender equality

The Australian Government Office for Women invites you to have your say on gender equality in Australia.

On 8 March 2023, the Office for Women launched a [discussion paper](#) and [survey](#) to inform the development of the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality.

The strategy will guide whole-of-community action to help make Australia a leader in gender equality.

Consultations are open until 19 April. The Government will release the strategy in the second half of 2023.

To have your say, visit the [National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality webpage](#).

Facts from FAL

Reporting changes to foster care or long-term protection

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

Providers that receive ACCS for a child that is at risk of serious abuse or neglect must report any change to the formal foster care arrangement or long-term protection order that applies to that child.

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

You must report within 7 days after the provider becomes aware of the change. 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.

Reminder: submitting session reports

You must submit accurate and timely session reports – it's the law.

Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

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

We have information [on our website](#) to help you through the process.



For families

Confirm your 2021–22 income

Services Australia is balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2021–22 financial year. You must confirm your 2021–22 income before your CCS can be balanced.

You can confirm your income by:

- lodging your tax return, or
- [telling Services Australia that you don't need to lodge a tax return](#) and confirm your income.

You will receive an outcome once your CCS has been balanced.

Learn more about CCS balancing on the [Services Australia website](#).



Queensland floods: period of emergency declared

We've declared a **Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency for the early childhood education and care sector in the Shire of Burke, in north-west Queensland, following flooding.**

The period of emergency applies from 9 to 21 March 2023 for services and families in the affected region.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates 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 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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [qld.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 [Queensland Fire and Emergency Services website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



NT floods: period of emergency extended

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in place for the Victoria Daly Regional Council area, in the Northern Territory, following flooding.

The period of emergency now applies from 2 to 28 March 2023 for services and families in the affected region.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates 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 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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nt.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 [NT Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



From the department

Help us pilot our new learning platform

We're introducing a new learning management system soon. We're looking for providers to be amongst the first to try it out.

The platform will host eLearning courses to help you meet your obligations under Family Assistance Law.

We invite you to join our user reference group, which will help us pilot the platform. We have 400 participants from across the sector and are welcoming new members.

Members will have the opportunity to:

- test the platform and its courses
- provide feedback through course evaluation forms and a post-pilot survey.

If you want to get involved, [express your interest](#) via email by 17 March 2023.

Activity test changes from July 2023

From 10 July 2023, there are changes to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test for families with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children.

A family's activity level affects the amount of CCS they can get.

Families will be able to get a minimum of 36 hours subsidised care per fortnight for each Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child in their care, regardless of their activity level.

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

Make sure you're [getting our emails](#) and join our [Facebook group](#) so you don't miss any updates.

Operating before CCS approval is granted

You must be approved to operate a service that offers CCS to families. Please be aware of the business and financial risks if you choose to operate before you receive CCS approval.

Approval is not automatic. It can only be granted after we carefully assess your application.

It's up to you whether to operate before you know the outcome of your CCS application.

Please understand the business and financial risks if you choose to operate before you're approved:

- If we approve your application, we'll only backdate CCS payments to the day you submitted your application, provided that this is on or after the start date of your National Law approval.
- If we refuse your application, we won't make any CCS payments.
- If we refuse or cancel your application because you don't meet fit and proper requirements, you'll have to wait 18 months before reapplying. This is known as the application exclusion period.



We strongly recommend that you do not charge fees based on estimated CCS entitlements before you know the outcome of your application. You should also advise families that your service is not yet CCS approved.

We are working to process applications as quickly as possible, but you should not assume that your application will be finalised before your proposed service start date.

You can help us process your application by:

- submitting your application as early as possible to allow time for assessment
- including all the mandatory information and documents in your application.

[Learn more about becoming an approved provider.](#)

CCS Helpdesk closed next Monday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday in the ACT on Monday 13 March.

The helpdesk will reopen at 9 am AEDT on Tuesday 14 March.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime [by email](#) and we will respond during business hours.

Spotlight on the sector

Update of National Quality Frameworks

The National Quality Frameworks – *Belonging, Being and Becoming* and *My Time, Our Place* – now reflect contemporary practices and contain new principles and clearer guidance for educators.

The updates strengthen the frameworks' connection with the National Quality Standard in areas including:

- transitions
- sustainability
- theoretical approaches
- critical reflection
- inclusion
- importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing.

Throughout 2023, providers, services and educators can familiarise themselves with updated frameworks and begin incorporating them into their programs and practice. They will become mandatory in early 2024.

[Visit the ACECQA website to:](#)

- download the frameworks
- read more about the updates
- learn about the transition process.

Be You Professional Learning: therapeutic storytelling

Explore the latest [Be You](#) Professional Learning module on [therapeutic storytelling](#).



The module provides educators with information about the purpose, benefits, principles and strategies of therapeutic storytelling. It also outlines how to apply these concepts in everyday practice with young children.

Facts from FAL

Report changes to educator qualifications

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

You must report if a Family Day Care or In Home Care educator obtains a child care qualification from a registered training organisation owned or controlled by a [person with management or control](#) (PMC) and it appears that the educator has not obtained the qualification solely on their own merit.

This task can be performed by:

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

You must report within 7 days after the provider becomes aware of the matter. Report through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (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.

For families

How to check your claim status online

You can check the progress of your Child Care Subsidy claim online, using your [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#), or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

Learn how on the [Services Australia website](#).



NT floods: period of emergency declared

We've declared a period of emergency for the early childhood education and care sector in the Victoria Daly Regional Council area following flooding.

The period of emergency applies from 2 to 14 March 2023 for services and families in the affected region.

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 the 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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nt.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 [NT Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information



From the department

Subsidy rates for second and younger children from July

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is changing. From July 2023 most families using child care will get more CCS.

Families earning below \$362,408 with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children when the changes occur on 10 July.

The higher rate for second and younger children will end when a family earns \$362,408 or more. All children will then receive the standard CCS rate.

Standard CCS rates

The income limit for standard CCS rates is increasing to \$530,000.

Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down 1% for each \$5,000 earned.

Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.

Help families understand changes

Help your families understand what's changing by displaying this [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service.

Families should keep their income estimate up to date. Find an article below to share with families at your service.

Keep an eye on our channels for more information and resources in the lead up to July.

What to do if your ACCS child wellbeing application was rejected

Unlike other subsidies, providers apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing on behalf of a family. Here's what you need to know if your application has been rejected.

If your application was rejected, you can view the rejection reason in the outcome letter within the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You can also see the agency that assessed your application.

If you'd like more information about why it was rejected, you'll need to contact the appropriate team:

- If the application was assessed by Services Australia, email ACCS.CWB.Review@servicesaustralia.gov.au.
- If the application was assessed by our department, email childwellbeing@education.gov.au.

Find more information about ACCS child wellbeing [on our website](#).

Becoming an approved provider

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.

We have [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.

Applicants must read this information carefully before applying and ensure they submit a complete application.

If your application is incomplete, we'll ask for more information before we begin our assessment. If you don't provide this information your application will be rejected and you'll need to reapply.

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

Claiming Inclusion Development Fund Subsidy

Services that require additional support to address barriers to inclusion can apply for the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) subsidy for an Additional Educator under the [Inclusion Support Program](#) (ISP).

When submitting claims, services must:

- Identify the Additional Educator. This must be the additional person employed in this role to utilise the approved IDF hours.
- Provide details of when the Additional Educator attended the care environment, up to the maximum weekly approved hours on the approved IS Case.
- Provide details of when the eligible child attended the care environment, including their enrolment and attendance information.

Services must keep the relevant evidence relating to the eligible child and the Additional Educator.

[Learn more about claiming IDF Subsidy](#).

From the sector

Upskill your workforce with fee-free training

Educators play a vital role in laying the foundations for children's learning and development. Support your educators to upskill and gain qualifications without tuition fees.

Fee-free TAFE can provide future educators with the benefit of no tuition fees and employment opportunities in an in-demand sector.

Courses are available in every state and territory. Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care being a popular entry-level course.

Visit [Your Career](#) for more on eligibility and enrolling in a fee-free course.



Update to transportation requirements from today

From 1 March 2023, there are new regulatory requirements for centre-based services that provide regular transportation.

Under the requirements, approved providers must:

- Ensure a staff member or nominated supervisor accounts for and makes a record of children as they get in or out of a vehicle at a service.
- Ensure records are made confirming a completed check of the inside of a vehicle at the service, after all children have left to ensure no children remain.
- Notify the regulatory authority when they start providing or arranging regular transport, and again when they finish, which can be done via the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#).

[Find out more on the new requirements on the ACECQA website.](#)

Case study: From the Ground Up



Have you seen our latest case study about a leadership program that is inspiring early learning educators?

Participants have given positive accounts of their time in the From the Ground Up program.

Pictured is one of those who went through the six-month program, Jennifer Bell, the service manager at Busy Bees in Chinchilla, Queensland.

[Read the case study on From the Ground Up.](#)



Facts from FAL

Reporting serious convictions

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

You must report a serious conviction or guilty finding for:

- [persons with management or control of the provider](#) (PMCs)
- Family Day Care educators
- In Home Care educators.

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report within 24 hours after becoming aware of the conviction or guilty finding. 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.

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. 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 are issued for a range of reasons. Some examples include:

- not correctly reporting your fee information
- not providing notifications on time
- failure to submit session reports on time
- failure to keep records.

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

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

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.



For families

Update your Child Care Subsidy activity levels online

Make sure to tell Services Australia when there's a change to your activity level, so that you're paid the right amount of Child Care Subsidy.

Learn how on the [Services Australia website](#).

Review your income estimate

If you get Family Tax Benefit or Child Care Subsidy you should review your family income estimate, so you're paid correctly.

Learn how on the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

From July, the gap fee must be paid electronically

Families using child care must pay the gap fee using electronic means from 1 July 2023.

The gap fee is the difference between the provider's fee and the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) amount. Find out more about [gap fees](#) and [Child Care Subsidy](#).

Electronic funds transfer, or EFT, is when a customer pays a bill using electronic means. Typical EFT payment methods include:

- bank or credit card, including mobile wallets
- direct deposit or bank transfer, including PayID
- online payment systems through third party software
- BPAY or Centrepay.

This change will help us protect CCS against fraud and non-compliance. We will check EFT payments against provider and service bank statements and receipts. This way, we can prevent fraudulent CCS claims for care that did not take place. In turn, this ensures CCS flows fairly to families.

Most services already accept EFT payments. This is because it's safer for staff and easier to administer.

Similarly, over 98% of families already use EFT to pay their gap fee. Most families get salaries or benefits electronically, making it easy to pay the gap fee using EFT.

Families who cannot use EFT to pay their gap fee should talk to their service. Families seeking EFT exemption might be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) (ACCS). ACCS may cover all of a child's child care fees.

Exemptions will apply in limited circumstances. We will provide more information about exemptions soon. We'll also develop some materials you can use to communicate this measure to families.

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

More support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Nine more [Connected Beginning](#) sites are being developed across Australia. The sites will help more than 3,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get ready for school.

The program aims to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's and families' engagement with support services, ensuring children are safe, healthy and ready to thrive at school by the age of 5.

The sites, which are underway, are in:

- Geraldton and South Hedland, Western Australia
- Mackay and Eagleby, Queensland
- Katherine and Ngukurr, Northern Territory
- Wagga Wagga, New South Wales



- Canberra, Australian Capital Territory
- Whittlesea, Victoria.

Read more about the [Connected Beginnings program](#) on our website.

See where the [34 Connected Beginnings sites are located](#).

Changes to CCS from July 2023

CCS is changing. Help your families understand what's changing by displaying this [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service.

From 10 July 2023, most families using early childhood education and care will get more CCS.

Here's what you need to know:

- The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children.

Families can find out more by visiting the [Services Australia website](#), subscribing to the [Raising Kids news update](#), and following the [Family Update Facebook page](#).

Calls from families

The CCS Helpdesk is receiving a high volume of enquiries from families. Please do not refer families to the helpdesk. The helpdesk provides support to approved providers and services only.

Families can find information about CCS and ACCS on the [Services Australia website](#). Families can also subscribe to [news for families](#) or follow the [Family Update Facebook page](#) to stay up to date.

Families who have questions should [contact Services Australia](#).

If a family believes a child care service is doing something illegal or fraudulent, they can contact the tip off line on 1800 664 231 or tipoffline@education.gov.au.



Spotlight on the sector

Experts meet to discuss Early Years Strategy



Children's early years came under the national spotlight in Canberra last Friday.

Parents and community organisations joined experts from across the sector, academics, representatives from peak bodies, and government and non-government organisations to attend the National Early Years Summit at Australian Parliament House.

The summit is part of the broad consultation for the development of a Commonwealth Early Years Strategy.

Minister for Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, and Minister for Early Childhood Education and Youth, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP (pictured), opened the all-day summit.

The 100 invited participants broke into groups to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing early childhood education and care services and the wider community.

The summit heard from those representing families and children, First Nations communities and people with disability.

Read [Dr Aly's opening address](#) to the summit.

Read Minister Aly and Minister Rishworth's [joint Media Release](#).

Learn more about the [consultation process for the Early Years Strategy](#).



Facts from FAL

Report changes to working with children status

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

You must report any change to the working with children status of [any person in the provider or service who must have this check](#).

You must report when a working with children card is renewed, extended, suspended, revoked, lapsed or expired.

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

You must report within 24 hours of becoming aware of the change of status. Report through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (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.

For families

Withholding Child Care Subsidy

Did you know Services Australia withholds 5% of your Child Care Subsidy (CCS)? You can vary this amount to suit your circumstances.

Services Australia uses your family income estimate to work out how much subsidy you'll get. If you underestimate your family income, you may end up with an overpayment.

Services Australia will use the amount withheld to help reduce what you owe.

You can change your withholding percentage up to twice a year using your [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#).

For more information about withholding, visit the [Services Australia website](#).



From the department

Early Learning Teaching Pilot to help children prepare for school

The Minister for Early Childhood Education and Youth, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, has launched the Early Learning Teaching Pilot at Yappera Children's Service in Thornbury, Victoria.

The Australian Government has committed \$1.9 million to design, implement and evaluate the pilot at three services.

The pilot will strengthen literacy and numeracy skills, with a focus on getting up to 200 children, many of them First Nations children, ready for school.

The Government has partnered with the University of Melbourne to deliver and evaluate the pilot.

The pilot draws on international evidence and local expertise about the benefits of different instructional approaches. It aims to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills through strengthened professional development, mentoring and feedback support for educators.

The pilot will complement play-based approaches in line with the existing Australian Early Years Learning Framework, known to improve children's early developmental outcomes.

Read [our announcement](#) for more information on the pilot.

The pilot is part of the Department of Education's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. Read more about the measures [on our website](#).

Changes to the activity test from July 2023

From 10 July 2023, there are changes to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test for families with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

A family's activity level affects the amount of CCS they can get.

The changes mean families can get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight for each Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in their care. This is regardless of their family's activity level.

Learn more about these changes [on our website](#). We'll share more information and resources about this measure in the lead up to July.

New financial reporting obligations for large providers

From 1 July 2023, large early childhood education and care providers will have new financial reporting obligations.

Large providers will be required to report financial information to the department, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that:

- operates 25 or more services



- shares operation of 25 or more services with another provider
- plans to operate or share operation of 25 or more services.

This information will help us:

- assess the financial viability of large providers
- improve the transparency of child care costs
- protect the government's investment in the sector.

We'll contact large providers directly via email to let them know about the new obligations. Make sure your provider-level email address is up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

We'll also provide updates via [our email newsletter](#) and in [our Facebook group](#).

Learn more about new financial reporting obligations for large providers [on our website](#).

Spotlight on the sector

Case study: leadership program inspires educators



A leadership program is offering educators and early childhood teachers across Australia valuable professional development, a chance to network, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Participants have given positive accounts of their time in the [From the Ground Up](#) program.

Assistant director Catherine Asquith, pictured above left, and director Paige Smith, from Goodstart Early Learning at Mount Hutton, NSW, are two of almost 80 participants to have completed the program.

Participants were enrolled in pairs with one an experienced leader and the other an emerging one. Educators said the program helped them tap into best practice and to share experiences.



Ms Asquith said they received positive feedback from sharing their research with colleagues and neighbouring services.

“The goal ought to be to create not just great educators for early learning but great educators for life,” she said.

Read more about the program, and hear from other participants and the program’s creators, in the [case study published on our website](#).

Productivity Commission inquiry: next steps

The Australian Government has released the terms of reference for the Productivity Commission inquiry into Australia’s early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

The inquiry will make recommendations to support affordable, accessible, equitable and high-quality ECEC that reduces barriers to workforce participation and supports children’s learning and development.

The inquiry starts on 1 March 2023, with a final report to be provided to the Government by 30 June 2024.

The commission will undertake a broad public consultation process as part of the inquiry, including inviting public submissions.

We’ll let you know more about opportunities to take part in the inquiry.

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

[Read the terms of reference on the Productivity Commission website.](#)

Early years summit on Friday

The Australian Government is holding a national summit at Australian Parliament House on Friday to support the development of the Early Years Strategy.

Around 100 people have been invited from across the early years sector, including industry leaders, academics, advocates, peak bodies, and parents and carers to share their insights and experiences at the National Early Years Summit.

The summit is part of the broader consultation for the strategy and will inform how the Australian Government can best support young children, and how the early years system can be strengthened to give all children the best start in life.

A short online survey is open until 3 March to provide feedback on Australians’ aspirations for young children.

The Government has released a discussion paper about the strategy with submissions now open.

A series of community roundtables will take place after the summit.

To see the discussion paper, provide a submission, complete the survey, and keep up to date on the consultation processes, please [visit the Early Years Strategy website](#).

Reminder: ACCC ECEC price inquiry

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is calling for expressions of interest from providers who can assist the inquiry into ECEC prices and costs.



The ACCC wants to hear from Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and In Home Care providers that have fewer than 40 services. The ACCC will reach out directly to providers that have 40 or more services.

The ACCC is interested in the experiences of these providers to better understand costs associated with running this type of business.

Registrations will close on 28 February 2023, so [express your interest now via the ACCC website](#).

Facts from FAL

Report adverse background checks

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

You must report if the following people receive an adverse background check:

- persons with management or control of the provider (PMCs)
- Family Day Care educators
- In Home Care educators.

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report within 7 days after receiving notice of the adverse background check. Report through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

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

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

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

Need a refresher on enrolments?

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS payments. Check out [our website](#) and make sure you're following the correct process.

An enrolment links:

- the child
- the person claiming CCS (usually a parent or carer), and
- the service.

There are 4 steps in the enrolment process:

1. The family must first make a CCS claim via their [Centrelink online account](#).
2. The provider and the family agree on care arrangements for the child.
3. The provider submits an enrolment notice, based on the agreed care arrangements, in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#) (CCSS).
4. The family confirms the enrolment via their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#).

Services Australia can only pay CCS if:



- the enrolment notice correctly identifies the person who made the CCS claim, and
- the family has confirmed the enrolment.

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

Remember to submit session reports on time

You must submit accurate and timely session reports – it's the law.

Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

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

Find more information about session reports [on our website](#).

Watch video: how to avoid an overpayment



You may sometimes receive more CCS than you're entitled to. This is known as an overpayment. [Watch our video on overpayments to learn how they happen and how to avoid them.](#)

Overpayments generally occur if you withdraw or change a session report, such as amending to record fewer hours of care.

If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to pay back the difference. This is called offsetting. You can see if offsetting has occurred in your payment advice in the CCSS.

The best way to avoid an overpayment is to [submit accurate and timely session reports](#).

For more information on overpayments, visit [our website](#).



For families

Find child care

Did you know StartingBlocks.gov.au is the one place where you can find and compare early childhood education and care services?

On the Starting Blocks website, you can:

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

Visit StartingBlocks.gov.au to start searching.



From the department

Changes to CCS from July 2023

From 10 July 2023, most families using early childhood education and care (ECEC) will get more Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Help your families understand what's changing by displaying this [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service.

Families can find out more by:

- visiting servicesaustralia.gov.au/changes-if-you-get-family-payments
- subscribing to news for families at servicesaustralia.gov.au/news
- following the [Family Update Facebook page](#).

Latest quarterly reports released

New quarterly reports on ECEC in Australia are now available.

The [December quarter 2021](#) and [March quarter 2022](#) reports are available on our website.

Each quarter we issue a summary of data about the sector. It includes data on the:

- 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.

See our [announcement](#) for a summary of the key findings.

Access the full reports [on our website](#).

From the sector

Give input to Early Years Strategy

The Australian Government has released a discussion paper with further detail about the Early Years Strategy, and called for public submissions on the direction of the strategy.

The strategy will guide early years policies and programs across the Commonwealth for the next decade to ensure children aged 5 and below have the best start in life.

The discussion paper is part of a broad stakeholder engagement process for the strategy, including with the ECEC sector, and educators.

The release of the paper comes ahead of the National Early Years Summit, which will be held at Australian Parliament House on Friday 17 February with more than 100 invited participants.



A short online survey is also open until 3 March to help identify families' priorities for the strategy.

- To read the discussion paper, complete the survey, and learn how to have your say, [visit the Early Years Strategy consultation website](#).
- Learn more in [our announcement on the release of the discussion paper](#).

New data: service quality improves, again

Quality standards at Australia's ECEC services continue to rise, according to the latest data from ACECQA.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) Snapshot for the fourth quarter of 2022 shows:

- 89% of services are rated as Meeting National Quality Standard (NQS) or above
- a marked rise from 56% in 2013, when quality ratings were first published
- as of 1 January 2023, 17,094 NQF approved services operated in Australia.

The quarterly NQF Snapshots provide analysis and information on the profile of the sector, the NQS ratings given to services, and an array of other data.

[Read the latest quarterly NQF snapshot](#).

Can you assist ACCC ECEC price inquiry?

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is calling for expressions of interest from providers who can assist the inquiry into ECEC prices and costs.

The ACCC wants to hear from Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and In Home Care providers that have fewer than 40 services. The ACCC will reach out directly to providers that have 40 or more services.

The ACCC is interested in the experiences of these providers to better understand costs associated with running this type of business.

Treasurer, the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers, directed the ACCC in October last year to hold the inquiry into ECEC prices, with the final report due at the end of this year.

You can [express your interest on the ACCC website](#). Registrations close on 28 February 2023.

Reminder: jobs classification review

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) review into how jobs are classified in Australia is open for submissions from the sector.

You can provide feedback on ECEC sector occupation classifications until 28 April.

Find more information on how to participate on the [ABS website](#).

Facts from FAL

Report if PMCs are no longer fit and proper

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



You must report if you become aware of an event or circumstance that indicates a person with management or control (PMC) can no longer be considered [fit and proper](#).

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report within 7 days after becoming aware of the circumstance. Report through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) 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.

For families

What to do if you've started paying full fees

If you've been getting Child Care Subsidy (CCS) but started paying full fees, there are details you can check.

There are things you need to do to keep getting CCS. If you haven't done these, your CCS may have stopped.

Make sure:

- you've confirmed your family's income within time limits, and
- your activity level is recorded correctly.

Visit the [Services Australia website](#) to learn more.



WA floods: period of emergency extended

We've extended the period of emergency in the Shire of Derby – West Kimberley, Western Australia following ongoing flooding.

The period of emergency now applies from 6 January to 14 February 2023 for services and families in Derby – West Kimberley.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates 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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [wa.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 [WA State Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information.



From the department

Help families understand CCS changes

Print and display new resources at your service to help families understand the changes to Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

From July 2023 most families using child care will get more CCS. Here's what you need to know:

The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.

- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children.

You can help your families understand what the changes mean for them. Do this by:

- printing and displaying this [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) at your service
- sharing [this post](#) from Services Australia's Family Update Facebook page.

Becoming an approved provider

We are currently receiving a high volume of CCS provider approval applications. Please be aware of the assessment wait times and ensure your application is complete before submitting.

We have [step-by-step guidance on our website](#) about the approval process. Applicants must read this information carefully before applying.

We can only assess complete applications. Our page on [getting ready to apply](#) outlines what an application must include.

We strongly encourage all applicants to complete and submit the [supplied governance statement](#). This will ensure you provide the information we need and will help us process your application.

Once you submit an application, it is queued for processing. The current expected wait time is approximately four weeks.

Once we reach your application, we do a completeness check and then begin a rigorous assessment. Assessment times vary depending on the circumstances of the application.

It's up to you whether to operate before you know the outcome of your application. We outline the business and financial risks if you choose to operate before you're approved [on our website](#).

Join the community

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is now home to a network of over 5,500 early childhood education and care representatives.



If you haven't already, [join the group](#) and share it with your colleagues to learn, explore, and connect with us and others in your sector.

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

From the sector

New transportation requirements from March 2023

From 1 March 2023, new regulatory requirements will apply to centre-based services that provide regular transportation.

Under the new requirements, approved providers must:

- Ensure a staff member or nominated supervisor accounts for and makes a record of children as they get in or out of a vehicle at a service.
- Ensure records are made confirming a completed check of the inside of a vehicle at the service, after all children have left to ensure no children remain.
- Notify the regulatory authority when they start providing or arranging regular transport, and again when they finish, which can be done via the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#).

Read more about the new requirements on [ACECQA's website](#).

Become a leader in wellbeing

Do you want to build your knowledge, skills, and confidence leading wellbeing at your service?

Promoting mental health from the top can motivate and empower others to get on board.

Be sure to read the Be You Leaders Handbook and join the network of wellbeing leaders.

[Find out more and register](#).

Facts from FAL

Report when a PMC leaves or stops having day-to-day control

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

You must report when a person with management or control (PMC):

- leaves their role
- changes their role and their new role no longer includes day-to-day responsibility for any of the provider's approved child care services.

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report within 7 days of the person ceasing to have management or control of the provider. Report through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (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.

Make sure your details are up to date

It's a great time to update your contact details, including email addresses, in the [Child Care Subsidy System \(CCSS\)](#) so you don't miss important information.

You can do this through:

- the [PEP](#), or
- your third-party software.

You should also identify all [PMCs](#) in the CCSS and keep their information up to date too.

For families

Have you confirmed your 21–22 income?

Services Australia is currently balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2021–22 financial year. You must confirm your 2021–22 income before your CCS can be balanced.

You can confirm your income by:

- lodging your tax return, or
- [telling Services Australia that you don't need to lodge a tax return](#) and confirming your income.

You will receive an outcome once your CCS has been balanced.

For more information about CCS balancing, visit the [Services Australia website](#).



Floods update: emergency support extended in Derby – West Kimberley

We've extended the period of emergency in the Shire of Derby – West Kimberley, Western Australia following ongoing flooding.

The period of emergency now applies from 6 January to 7 February 2023 for services and families in Derby – West Kimberley.

The period of emergency ends for all other regions in Western Australia and the Northern Territory at 11.59pm on 31 January 2023. Support available after a period of emergency is outlined below.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates 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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [wa.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 [WA State Emergency Service](#) for current emergency information.



From the department

CCS Helpdesk closed tomorrow

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed for the public holiday on Thursday 26 January.

The helpdesk will reopen at 9 am AEDT on Friday 27 January.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime [by email](#) and we will respond during business hours.

Changes to CCS from July 2023

Most families using early childhood education and care will get more CCS from July 2023.

Here's what you need to know:

- The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down by 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children.

In the lead-up to July, we'll provide you with information and resources to share with families.

Make sure you're [getting our emails](#) and join our [Facebook group](#) so you don't miss any updates.

Reminder: workforce discount now includes cooks

As of 1 January 2023, cooks are now included in the [early childhood workforce discount](#).

Providers can now offer a discounted fee to cooks they employ whose children are enrolled at one of their services. The discount will not affect an employee's CCS entitlement.

The cook must be employed at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service to be eligible for the discount.

[Learn more about the discount.](#)

From the sector

National early learning frameworks have been updated

***Belonging, Being and Becoming* and *My Time, Our Place* now reflect contemporary practices and contain new principles and clearer guidance for educators.**

Education Ministers endorsed the frameworks in December 2022 after an extensive consultation process.



In particular, the updates strengthen the frameworks' connection with the National Quality Standard in areas such as:

- transitions
- sustainability
- theoretical approaches
- critical reflection
- inclusion
- the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing.

Throughout 2023, providers, services and educators can familiarise themselves with updated frameworks and begin incorporating them into program and practice. They will become mandatory in early 2024.

[Visit the ACECQA website](#) to:

- download the updated frameworks
- read detailed information about the updates
- find out more about the transition process.

ABS review into the classification of ECEC

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is reviewing how jobs are classified in Australia.

This will ensure classifications reflect the contemporary labour market and Australia's workforce needs.

You can provide feedback on early childhood education and care sector occupation classifications. Public consultations open on 1 February.

Updated classifications will be released in December 2024.

Find more information on how to participate via the [ABS website](#).

Webinar: get help with your small business

Does your 2023 include growing your small business? Jobs Showcase recently hosted a webinar to help you find the support you'll need.

Learn how Self-Employment Assistance can help your small business. Plus hear guest speakers share their success stories and top tips to kick-start your self-employment journey.

Catch the webinar via [Jobs Showcase On Demand](#).

Facts from FAL

Report changes to FDC and IHC educator contact details

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

You must report changes to names and contact details for:



- Family Day Care educators
- In Home Care educators.

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 within 7 days after becoming aware of the change. Report through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) 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.

For families

Confirming child care enrolments for CCS

You need to lodge a claim or already be getting Child Care Subsidy to confirm your child care enrolment.

Visit the [Services Australia website](#) to learn more.



NT and WA floods: period of emergency extended

We've extended the period of emergency in place for the early childhood education and care sector in parts of the Northern Territory and Western Australia following ongoing flooding.

The period of emergency now applies from 6 to 31 January 2023 for services and families in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Victoria Daly Regional Council, NT
- Shire of Broome, WA
- Shire of Derby - West Kimberley, WA

See the [list of affected LGAs](#) on our website. We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates 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 (CCCCF) 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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nt.gov.au](#) or [wa.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:
 - [NT Emergency Service](#)
 - [WA State Emergency Service](#).



From the department

Understand Additional Child Care Subsidy

We've updated the information about **Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)** [on our website](#).

ACCS provides extra help with fees to families facing barriers to child care. It will usually cover all of a child's fees.

The [information on our website](#) is for providers that administer ACCS. Families should go to the [Services Australia website](#).

From the sector

Resources to support children with disability

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.

All services must comply with the DDA and failure to do so is unlawful. This means that services must make reasonable adjustments to fit the requirements of children with disability.

The resources are available on the ACECQA website, and include an [information sheet, 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.

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

Facts from FAL

Report changes to PMC contact details

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

You must report changes to names and contact details for:

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

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report within 7 days of becoming aware of the change. Report through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (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.

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.

Find out 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 are issued for a range of reasons. Some examples include:

- not correctly reporting your fee information
- not passing on or remitting a fee reduction amount
- failure to meet reporting requirements
- failure 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 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](#).

Reminder: submitting session reports

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

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

We have information on our website to help you understand:

- 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 more about session reports](#).



For families

Understand Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy helps with the cost of approved early childhood education and care.

Looking for information about the Child Care Subsidy in your language? Find information in 14 languages on the [Services Australia website](#).



NT and WA floods: period of emergency extended

We've extended the period of emergency in place for the early childhood education and care sector in parts of the Northern Territory and Western Australia following ongoing flooding.

The period of emergency now applies from 6 to 24 January 2023 for services and families in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Victoria Daly Regional Council, NT
- Shire of Broome, WA
- Shire of Derby - West Kimberley, WA

See the [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

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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nt.gov.au](#) or [wa.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:
 - [NT Emergency Service](#)
 - [WA State Emergency Service](#).



From the department

Changes to CCS from July 2023

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is changing.

From July 2023 most families using child care will get more CCS. Here's what you need to know:

- The maximum amount of CCS is increasing from 85% to 90%.
- Families earning \$80,000 or less will get 90% subsidy.
- Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 will get a subsidy that tapers down from 90%, depending on their income. The subsidy will go down by 1% for each \$5,000 earned.
- Families with more than one child aged 5 or under, with income below \$356,756 can still get a higher rate for their second and younger children.

We'll provide information and resources for you to share with families over the coming weeks and months. Check that you're [getting our emails](#) and join our [Facebook group](#) so you don't miss an update.

Changes to early childhood workforce discount

Providers can now offer a discounted fee to cooks they employ whose children are enrolled at one of their services.

The [early childhood workforce discount](#) was introduced on 24 January 2022. It previously only applied to educators and early childhood teachers. As of 1 January 2023, it also applies to cooks.

The cook must:

- work at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service
- have a child enrolled at a service where they work or that you own.

The discount does not affect an employee's CCS entitlement.

The measure aims to help providers attract and retain their early childhood workforce.

Learn more about the discount, including an example of how it works, [on our website](#).

Update on the ACCC child care price inquiry

The [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission \(ACCC\)](#) has started its inquiry into early childhood education and care prices. A consultation schedule is now available on the [ACCC website](#).

The schedule includes a wide range of consultation and information gathering activities.

Stakeholders include:

- small, medium and large child care providers in metropolitan, regional and remote areas
- parents and carers
- educators and workforce participants



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- people with children who have a disability or complex needs.

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

Go to the consultation schedule on the [ACCC website](#).

From the sector

Check your water safety policies

It's a good time to ensure your water safety policies and procedures are up to date.

ACECQA has guidance on [developing water safety policies and procedures](#).

Facts from FAL

Check your details in the Child Care Subsidy System

You must keep your contact details up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System \(CCSS\)](#).

You must also identify all [persons with management or control](#) (PMCs) in the CCSS and keep their information up to date too.

If this information is not correct in the CCSS:

- we cannot communicate essential information to you
- we cannot contact you in an emergency
- families may not get their CCS payments
- we may issue an [infringement](#).

Check and update your details via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Report details of new FDC and IHC educators

You must report the name and contact details for new:

- Family Day Care educators
- In Home Care educators.

You must also:

- declare that the [required checks](#) for these people are complete
- report details of their working with children checks in the [CCSS](#)
- show evidence of these checks if we ask.

This task can be performed by:

- a PMC



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

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.

For families

Higher Child Care Subsidy rates for second and younger children

You may get a higher Child Care Subsidy if you have more than one child aged 5 or younger in care. You'll get the higher subsidy for your second child and younger children.

Learn more on the [Services Australia website](#).

Find child care

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

On the Starting Blocks website, you can:

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



South Australia floods: period of emergency extended in Renmark Paringa

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

The period of emergency now applies from 15 December 2022 to 17 January 2023 for services and families in the Renmark Paringa Local Government Area (LGA).

See the [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](#) (CCCCF) 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 the support available are [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 South Australian Government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Find information on the [South Australian 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 [South Australian state emergency service](#) website for current emergency information in your region.



NT and WA floods: period of emergency declared

We've declared a period of emergency for the early childhood education and care sector in parts of the Northern Territory and Western Australia following flooding.

The period of emergency applies from 6 to 17 January 2023 for services and families in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Victoria Daly Regional Council, NT
- Shire of Broome, WA
- Shire of Derby - West Kimberley, WA

See the [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

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 or territory government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nt.gov.au](#) or [wa.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:
 - [NT Emergency Service](#).
 - [WA State Emergency Service](#).



South Australia floods: period of emergency extended in Renmark Paringa

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

The period of emergency now applies from 15 December 2022 to 10 January 2023 for services and families in the Renmark Paringa Local Government Area (LGA).

See the [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](#).

Details of the support available are [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. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- The South Australian Government has support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Find information on the [South Australian 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 [South Australian state emergency service](#) website for current emergency information in your region.

