



Australian Government
Department of Education

Additional Child Care Subsidy child wellbeing

Guide for early childhood education and care
providers and services





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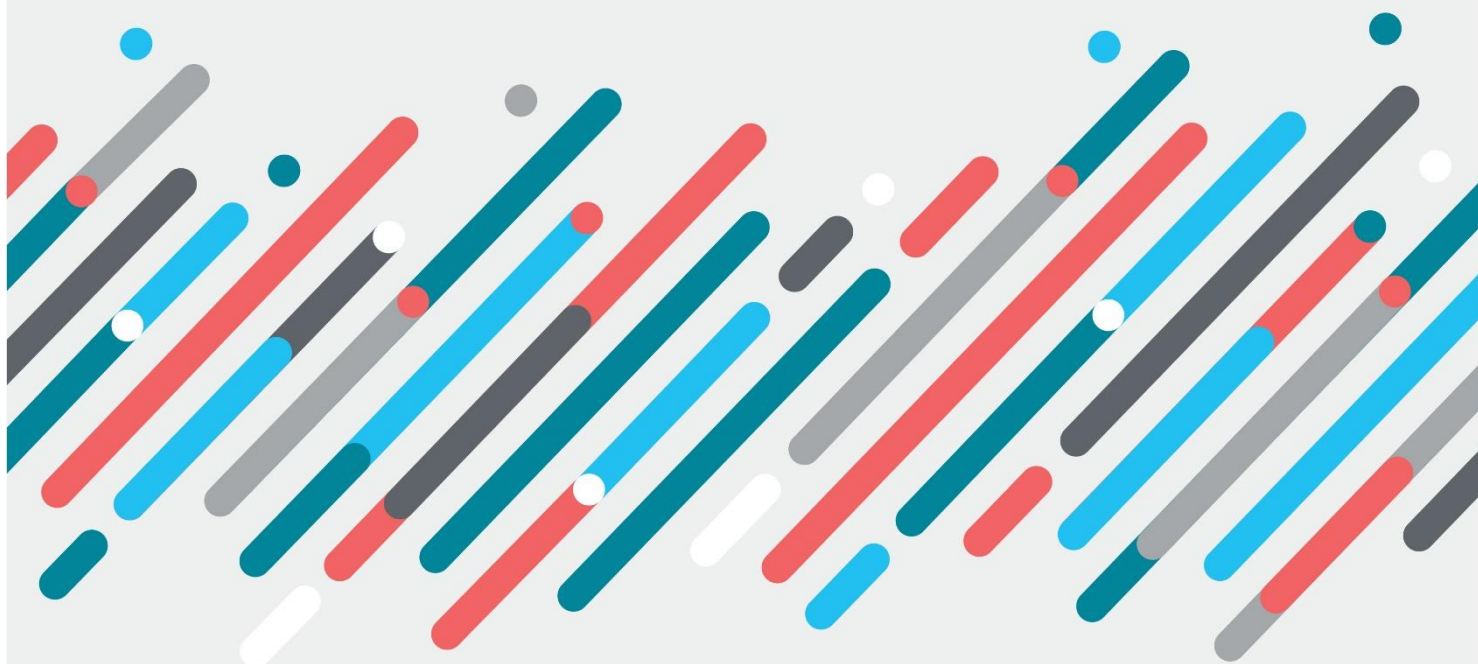
www.education.gov.au/early-childhood

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

You can also:

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

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



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About this guide

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing provides help with the cost of early childhood education and care. It's for families who care for a child needing practical help to support their child's safety and wellbeing.

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

Your role as a provider includes:

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

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

If you have questions, you can contact the Child Care Subsidy Provider Helpdesk by email at ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

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

About the child wellbeing subsidy

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/about>

ACCS child wellbeing provides help with the cost of early childhood education and care. It's for families who care for a child needing practical help to support their child's safety and wellbeing. This chapter outlines eligibility criteria, subsidy amount and time limits.

Eligibility

The child wellbeing subsidy helps children in need of wellbeing support. Families must meet criteria to get the subsidy. The parent or carer must:

- be eligible for [Child Care Subsidy \(CCS\)](#)
- care for a child who is in need of wellbeing support.

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

Subsidy amount

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

Families will also get the lower of either:

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

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

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



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

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

Example: when a service charges above the hourly rate cap

Flo's child is considered in need of wellbeing support. Her provider has given her access to ACCS child wellbeing for 6 weeks. The Centre Based Day Care service that Flo's child attends charges \$19 per hour, which is above the 2026–27 hourly rate cap of \$15.19. ACCS child wellbeing will cover up to 120% of the hourly rate cap, which is \$18.23. Flo must pay a gap fee of \$0.77 per hour.

Families may be able to get more subsidised hours and/or an increased subsidy rate in exceptional circumstances, where they:

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

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

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

In some cases, a third party like a charity may agree to pay gap fees for families receiving the ACCS child wellbeing subsidy. We have an example and more information on our [managing third-party payments and discounts](#) page.

Time limits

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

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

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

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

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

Debts

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

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

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

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

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

Identifying a child in need of wellbeing support

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/identifying-child-risk>

If you identify a child in need of wellbeing support, their family may be eligible for ACCS child wellbeing. This chapter outlines when a child is considered in need of wellbeing support.

Before you apply for ACCS child wellbeing

Before applying for ACCS child wellbeing on behalf of a family, you must take steps to establish their eligibility.

You must establish whether:

- they are a child in need of wellbeing support
- the child is enrolled correctly so the subsidy can be paid.

Categories of wellbeing support

Children who may be considered in need of wellbeing support for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing eligibility are children who:

- you identify as being in need of wellbeing support because they face a risk of suffering harm
- have been assessed as being [in need of wellbeing support under state or territory law](#).

You must keep records of observations and evidence that supports your assessment.

Services Australia must make an assessment about any children who you identify as being in need of wellbeing support:

- to backdate a certificate more than 28 days, but less than 13 weeks
- when applying for a determination.

Services Australia generally does not need to make an assessment when a child has been identified by a state or territory. However, there are some exceptions.

Children you identify as being in need of wellbeing support (children at risk of harm)

A child is considered to be in need of wellbeing support if they are at risk of experiencing harm because of:

- serious physical, emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- domestic or family violence
- neglect.

This can include events that:

- happened in the past
- are currently happening
- are likely to occur in the future.

A child can be in need of wellbeing support even if:

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

There are some circumstances that, on their own, do not constitute a child being in need of wellbeing support. These include:

- family income
- ethnic, cultural, religious or racial background
- location where the family lives
- socio-economic status
- whether the child is likely to benefit from early childhood education and care programs
- disability, severe illness or mental illness
- the child being in informal foster care or informal kinship care arrangements.

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

We have [examples in the next chapter](#) to help you understand when a child would be considered in need of wellbeing support.



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

Children identified in need of wellbeing support under state or territory law

A child is also considered as being in need of wellbeing support if they are:

- in formal foster care
- in a formal kinship arrangement
- on a long-term protection order, or
- engaged in programs listed on the [ACCS child wellbeing approved program list](#).

There are some instances where children may have been assessed by child protection authorities but are not:

- in formal statutory care arrangements
- participating in a program on the approved program list.

This can include where a child:

- is in informal care with relatives or kin without a formal order
- is on a temporary, emergency or interim arrangement
- is receiving respite care.

In these cases, child protection involvement alone is not sufficient. Additional third-party evidence is required to determine whether the child is eligible for ACCS child wellbeing.

Involvement with a child protection agency can be used as supporting evidence. However, this does not mean the child is automatically eligible for ACCS child wellbeing.

Foster and kinship care

For the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing, a child is in formal foster care or a formal kinship arrangement if:

- a state or territory court or tribunal has placed the child in the care of someone other than their parents
- the child lives with the carer, and
- the carer undertakes the responsibilities of a parent, including paying early childhood education and care fees.

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

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

Long-term protection orders

A protection order is a legal order made under a state or territory law. It gives a person responsibility for the supervision and care of a child. However, the state or territory department or authority retains parental responsibility or guardianship of the child.

Protection orders are considered long-term if:

- they are in place for 12 months or more
- there have been consecutive interim or short-term orders in place for a total of 12 months or more.

Emergency care

Children placed in emergency care by a state or territory government may be considered in need of wellbeing support.

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

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

Residential and other care types

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

- residential care

- group homes
- 24/7 Family Day Care.

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

How can we help?

We do not make assessments on ACCS child wellbeing eligibility. Services Australia undertake all required assessments for ACCS child wellbeing determinations and certificates.

If you're unsure whether a child is considered in need of wellbeing support for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing, you can contact the CCS Provider Helpdesk for advice. Call 1300 667 276 or email ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

What to tell us when seeking advice on ACCS child wellbeing

When contacting us, you should tell us the circumstances or events putting the child in need of wellbeing support. This includes past or current events, or circumstances that are likely to occur in the future. You should also tell us if the child is currently eligible for CCS.

If we need more details, we will contact you.

All information you provide us must [consider privacy obligations](#).

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

Examples to help you understand when a child is in need of wellbeing support

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/examples>

We've developed examples to help you understand when a child at your service may be considered in need of wellbeing support for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing.

Assessing harm

The following examples illustrate circumstances where a provider may assess a child is in need of wellbeing support. These examples are fictional and do not feature real people.

When a child does not meet the definition of being in need of wellbeing support under state or territory law

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

Following a conversation with Balendra's parents, you determine that he is in an environment that indicates apparent neglect. You make a file note of the conversation, outlining your concerns and why you believe Balendra is in need of wellbeing support.

Balendra does not meet the definition of being in need of wellbeing support or in need of protection under state or territory law. However, his family's circumstances indicate neglect, so he does meet the definition of being in need of wellbeing support for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing. You may issue a child wellbeing certificate so Balendra can attend care while his family gets extra help with fees.

Emerging risk

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

In this event, you may give Brianna access to ACCS child wellbeing based on your assessment that Brianna may not be provided with the basic needs that are essential for the child's physical and emotional wellbeing. When granting access based on emerging circumstances, you must have evidence showing there remains real and apparent likelihood that the child's basic needs will not be met. This could include evidence of significantly different or unusual behaviour.

Circumstances where a child is not necessarily in need of wellbeing support

The following examples illustrate circumstances that, on their own, do not necessarily mean that a child is in need of wellbeing support.

Family income

Lucy and Camille receive income support as their family's sole source of income. While this can be financially challenging, on its own, it does not mean their child Jack is in need of wellbeing support.

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

Ethnic, cultural, religious or racial background

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

However, Amez's mother Ashti suffers from serious post-traumatic stress disorder from her experiences in Iraq. Ashti does not have friends or family nearby to provide support. Ashti's emotional state sometimes impacts on her ability to meet Amez's basic needs that are essential for the child's physical and emotional wellbeing. In this circumstance, Amez's background has contributed to the circumstances, but is not the sole reason to assume neglect is happening.

Location

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

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

Disability, severe illness or mental illness

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

Disability

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

Simone's daughter, Ava, has a disability. Because of her disability, Ava cannot attend care with other children. She needs close supervision during meals and regular help with her daily needs. Simone works with Ava's support providers and an early childhood service to make sure Ava gets the support she needs. While Ava has significant support needs, there are no concerns about her safety or wellbeing. Her care needs are because of her disability, not because she is at risk of abuse or neglect. Disability supports, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), may be a better way to meet Ava's needs if she is eligible.

Severe illness

Amina's daughter, Zahra, has a complex medical condition. She needs regular medication, help with feeding, and close supervision to stay healthy and safe. Recently, educators at Zahra's service noticed she is often missing her medication and feeding equipment. Amina tells them her family is struggling to meet Zahra's daily care needs. The service also learns that Zahra has missed several specialist appointments and treatments. As a result, Zahra's health has gotten worse. This raises concerns that Zahra's basic physical and medical needs are not being met. Observations from educators, discussions with Amina, and information from Zahra's health professionals support these concerns. Zahra may be considered in need of ACCS child wellbeing support. This is because of the risk of harm from neglect, not because of her medical condition alone.

Mental illness

Thanh's mother has a psychiatric condition that is managed with medication. When Thanh's mother stops taking her medication, she forgets to purchase food and prepare meals. In this circumstance, Thanh's mother's failure to take her medication impacts Thanh's basic physical needs being met. The psychiatric condition alone does not mean that Thanh needs wellbeing support.

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

Talking with the family

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/talking-family>

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

When to have the conversation

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

Engaging with families early can:

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

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

- if this could result in the family withdrawing their child from care
- if you need time to engage a support service to support the family during the conversation.

Having the conversation

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

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

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

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

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

Be sensitive

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

Be aware that some of the terms which may be used in these discussions, like “at risk of abuse or neglect”, can be distressing for families. Instead, you may wish to use neutral and non-stigmatising language, such as the child being “in need of wellbeing support” due to having experienced events that have impacted their basic physical, emotional needs, wellbeing, or development.

Cultural and societal pressures and stigmas will inform the family’s view of language used in these conversations. You should seek to build your own understanding of the family’s perspective before starting the conversation.

Respect the family’s right to privacy.

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

Invite the family to have a support person accompany them.

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

Be empathetic and avoid judgement

Determining that a child is in need of wellbeing support does not necessarily mean that parents or carers have done something wrong.

A child can be in need of wellbeing support due to factors outside the family’s control. For example a parent may be temporarily unable to meet their child’s basic needs due to:

- serious illness or injury
- difficulties with their social and emotional wellbeing.

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

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

Provide clear information

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

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

- what the eligibility criteria are
- how many hours of care the family will have access to
- subsidy rates
- length of coverage
- what the family need to do
- the type of evidence required from a third-party organisation or professional
- who you will need to share information with and why
- the requirement for you to make a referral to an appropriate support agency.

When applying for ACCS child wellbeing, you must refer families to an [appropriate support agency](#) and identify the circumstances that have placed the child in need of wellbeing support. Your discussion should cover this. You should also discuss the kind of supports that would best suit the family.

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

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

The support agency may also contact the family.

Provide practical help

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

- navigating myGov
- contacting Services Australia.

Provide information about services they may not be aware of.

Focus on benefits

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

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

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

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

Respect the family's decision

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

- does not agree that their child is in need of wellbeing support
- if they are not comfortable accessing the subsidy.

In these cases, you should:

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

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



Example: starting the conversation

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

First Nations families

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

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

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

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

Welcome families to include an advocate

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

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

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

Listen

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

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

Take time

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

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

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

Be flexible

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

Focus on benefits

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

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

Gain informed consent

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

Resources for providers and services

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

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

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

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

[Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 to 2031](#) sets out an ambitious 10-year plan to help children in Australia to grow up safe and supported in their families, communities and culture.

Building relationships with First Nations support services

First Nations support services offer support that is:

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

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

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

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

Establishing eligibility for child wellbeing

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

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

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

Families must be eligible for Child Care Subsidy

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Children must be considered in need of wellbeing support

Our [identifying a child in need of wellbeing support](#) section outlines when ACCS child wellbeing should be applied.

You must enrol the child correctly

Families may miss out on payments if their child is not enrolled correctly.

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

Complying Written Arrangement

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

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

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

Provider Eligible Arrangement

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

A PEA enables Services Australia to pay the subsidy directly to you – the provider – when you cannot identify a CCS-eligible parent or carer, for example where the child has just entered foster care or the child's parent or guardian does not meet Australian residency requirements.

When you can use a PEA

There are 2 circumstances where you may be permitted to use a PEA.

Circumstance	What families must do	What providers must do
You may use a PEA when a child is in need of wellbeing support but their parent or carer is not eligible for CCS. For example, because the parent or carer does not meet the CCS residence rules .	The family must give you the child's Customer Reference Number (CRN).	Before enrolling the child, you must email childwellbeing@education.gov.au with acceptable evidence. This may include documentation confirming the parent or carer's visa status, or a Services Australia decision letter showing they are ineligible for CCS due to residency requirements. We'll confirm whether there is a CCS-eligible parent or carer and confirm whether the use of a PEA is appropriate. If you identify a CCS-eligible parent or carer at any point, you must end the PEA and enter into a CWA with the family.
You may use a PEA, for up to 13 weeks, for children in formal foster care or formal kinship care. This ensures these children have access to the subsidy while their carer is assessed for CCS. The 13 weeks cannot be extended. If child changes foster carer during the 13-week period, the new carer can use the remaining weeks. However, once the child has used all 13 weeks, you cannot extend or renew the PEA.	The child's carer should lodge a CCS claim before the 13-week period ends, in order to continue receiving the subsidy.	You should encourage the child's carer to lodge a CCS claim before the 13-week period ends. You must enter into a CWA with the carer once they've been assessed as eligible for CCS.



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

Just like any other enrolment, the PEA must include the child's CRN.

The child's parent or carer will need to provide you with the child's CRN before you can create a PEA. If the child does not have a CRN, the parent or carer will need to contact Services Australia to organise one.

Services Australia can help families get a CRN for their child, even if they do not meet the residence rules for CCS.

These families can get a CRN for their child by:

- contacting the Services Australia families line on 136 150
- going to a Services Australia office.

Families who need help in a language other than English can call the Services Australia multilingual phone service on 131 202.

Families should let Services Australia know that they are specifically requesting a child CRN for a PEA enrolment. This helps Services Australia give the right support.

When you can't use a PEA

You must not use a PEA in the following circumstances:

- If a child is attending In Home Care. In Home Care is only available for families who are CCS-eligible.
- If a child has no formal guardian and is in emergency care under the state or territory. You should discuss the responsibility for the cost of early childhood education and care with the state or territory agency.
- If a child has been placed in residential care, a group home or 24/7 Family Day Care. These children should be enrolled under an arrangement with an organisation. Learn more about [enrolment types](#).

Privacy

When you collect personal information from families, you must make sure that they:

- know that you are collecting their personal information
- understand that you will share this information with us
- consent to you sharing this information with us.

Sometimes, we need to share this information with other government departments, like Services Australia. We are authorised to collect and disclose this information under FAL.

You must consider [privacy obligations](#) when handling evidence and personal information.

Reporting obligations

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/reporting-obligations>

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

Making a child wellbeing referral

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

You must make a referral to an appropriate support agency that can provide support to the family.

You must:

- let them know the child is in need of wellbeing support and that you've applied for ACCS child wellbeing.
- make a record of the referral via the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

You do not need to remain in contact with the support agency.

Appropriate support agencies

An appropriate support agency is:

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

Organisations which deal with such matters on behalf of a state or territory department or agency can include, but are not limited to:

- child safety and protection agencies
- parenting assistance, including Family Support Programs
- child and maternal health services, including postnatal and antenatal services
- drug or alcohol or substance abuse services
- domestic violence, survivor of sexual assault support or other similar support services (including state or territory police)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and support services
- homelessness, crisis or public housing services.



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

Time limits for making a referral

There are time limits for when you must make the referral to the appropriate support agency when issuing a certificate:

- within 6 weeks from when the certificate comes into effect or
- before applying for a determination

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

When you don't need to make a referral

You do not need to make a referral if:

- you have already made a referral for a child within the last 6 weeks
- you were advised the child was in need of wellbeing support by an appropriate support agency, such as a state or territory child protection agency. This includes where the child or their family are participating in a program listed on the approved program list.

Mandatory reporting

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

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



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

Useful links by state and territory

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

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

Australian Capital Territory

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
Check your obligations in Keeping Children and Young People Safe: A guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT . Make a Child Concern Report to Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS).	FIRST Canberra Child and Family Centres ACT Community Directory

New South Wales

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
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Check your obligations in the Mandatory Reporter Guide. Make a report to the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11.	NSW Department of Communities and Justice Child and family health services Family Preservation Programs
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Northern Territory

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
Check your obligations on the NT Government website. Make a report to the child protection reporting line on 1800 700 250 or report online to CARE Services.	Families and Children Enquiry and Support (FACES) Hotline Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS)

Queensland

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
Check your obligations on the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety. Make a report to the Queensland Government.	Family and Child Connect

South Australia

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

Tasmania

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
Check your obligations and make a report via the Strong Families Safe Kids advice and referral line on 1800 000 123.	Strong Families Safe Kids advice and referral line

Victoria

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

Western Australia

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

Issuing a child wellbeing certificate

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/issuing-certificate>

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

What is a certificate?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reporting obligations

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

Evidence

You must keep records of observations and evidence that supports your assessment that a child is in need of wellbeing support. You must get informed consent from the family:

- to hold their personal information
- before you apply for ACCS child wellbeing on their behalf.

You do not need to submit the evidence to us, but we may ask to see it for auditing purposes.

How to issue

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Backdating a certificate

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

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

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

You can apply for extended backdating via the PEP or your third-party software.

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

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

Cancelling a certificate

If it becomes apparent that the family's circumstances change and the child stops being in need of wellbeing support for any week during the certificate period, you must cancel the certificate.

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

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

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

- A replacement certificate cannot cross over the start or end date of a cancelled certificate. If you need to cover part of the period of a cancelled certificate, you'll need to issue 2 certificates – one to cover the dates outside the cancelled certificate, and another for the dates inside the cancelled certificate.
- If you need to backdate a replacement certificate by more than 28 days, you must be confident that the family meets exceptional circumstances criteria for extended backdating.
- If you cancel a certificate and a new certificate is not submitted and approved for the same period, we will recover any ACCS child wellbeing already paid.



Example: cancelling and reissuing a certificate

You issue a certificate from Monday 8 June 2026 to Sunday 12 July 2026. After issuing, you realise the dates are not correct. The correct dates are Monday 25 May 2026 to Sunday 5 July 2026.

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

- one certificate from Monday 25 May 2026 to Sunday 7 June 2026
- a second certificate from Monday 8 June 2026 to Sunday 5 July 2026.

Reviews

Services Australia may change or cancel a certificate if they are not satisfied the child was in need of wellbeing support for any week during the certificate period. You will be notified of any review decisions through the PEP or your third-party software.

Applying for a child wellbeing determination

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/applying-determination>

If a family receiving ACCS child wellbeing needs wellbeing support for longer than 6 weeks, you can apply for a determination. A determination gives families access to the subsidy for up to 13 weeks at a time.

What is a determination?

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

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

Typically, you can apply for a determination for up to 13 weeks. You can apply for subsequent periods of up to 13 weeks if the child will continue to need wellbeing support.

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

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

You should apply for a determination as early as possible, if you think a child will continue to need wellbeing support, to avoid gaps in payments.

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

Reporting obligations

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

Evidence

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

Children identified as in need of wellbeing support under state or territory law

We do not need to make an assessment when a child has been identified as being in need of wellbeing support by state or territory law. This includes children:

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

- engaged in programs listed on the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing Approved Program List.

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

Evidence relating to formal foster care arrangements, formal kinship care arrangements, and long-term protection orders or other court orders (e.g. Domestic Violence Orders, Apprehended Violence Orders, and Temporary Protection Orders) is exempt from the six-month currency requirement and may be used for the life of the document.

Children you identify as needing wellbeing support

Services Australia must assess children who you, the family or an appropriate third party has identified as needing wellbeing support.

You must provide evidence the child needs wellbeing support because they face serious harm through abuse or neglect.

This includes evidence from a suitable third party, such as:

- a family support service
- school
- homelessness service
- mental health service
- drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre
- relevant professionals, including:
 - doctors
 - social workers
 - teachers
 - police officers.

You can apply for a second and subsequent determinations if the child remains in need of wellbeing support over a prolonged period.

In some cases, if the evidence you submitted with the initial determination is less than 6 months old, you can use it again on following applications.

If the evidence is more than 6 months old, you may need the family or carer's help to provide updated third-party evidence before submitting a new application.

Sourcing evidence

You must source evidence from appropriate third-party organisations or professionals that are independent of the child care service.

Any professional providing evidence must be sufficiently removed from the service and must not be receiving a financial benefit from the organisation.

Organisations that can provide evidence may include, but are not limited to:

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

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

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

You may give a [statutory declaration](#) for a child's first determination application if other sources of evidence are not available. In these rare cases, the statutory declaration must describe:

- the steps you took to gather evidence
- why you were unable to do so.

You must get informed consent from the family to hold their personal information.

You must consider [privacy obligations](#) when handling evidence and personal information.



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

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

Evidence requirements

Evidence should include an independent assessment by a third party that clearly and explicitly explains how the child or family meets the relevant eligibility criteria.

Evidence must be dated within 6 months before the start date of the determination, unless it relates to:

- formal foster care or kinship care arrangements
- long-term protection orders
- other court orders (for example, domestic violence, apprehended violence, and temporary protection orders).

Evidence must include the following information:

- the name of the child and their parent or carer
- the name and contact details of the organisation or professional providing the evidence
- the title and/or position of the person providing the evidence
- the date the evidence was provided
- a written or electronic signature.

How to apply

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

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

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

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

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

Backdating a determination

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

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

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

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

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

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

Receiving an outcome

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

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

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

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

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