



# Emails to the early childhood education and care sector

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## Annual cap removed

On 10 December we removed the annual cap for all families who get Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Families will no longer be subject to an annual cap on their CCS.

[Download the poster](#) about the removal of the annual cap and display it at your service.

## Higher CCS from March

From 7 March 2022, families with children aged 5 or under in care will get a higher subsidy.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

There's more information for providers, including a short video, [on our website](#).

We'll provide more information for you to share with families in the new year.

## Translated video: children on holiday



[Watch this video](#) to learn what to do when a child is absent or on holiday.

You must not report children who are absent as attending a session of care. Session reports must be accurate and complete.



You should only report sessions of care if the parent continues to pay fees and it is marked as an allowable absence.

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations, including:

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

[The video](#) is also available in the following languages:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Assyrian
- Dari
- Dinka
- French
- Hazaragi
- Nuer
- Somali
- Sudanese
- Swahili.

[Learn more about absences in the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

## New Preschool Reform Agreement comes into effect

**On 6 December, New South Wales became the first state to sign onto the new Preschool Reform Agreement, with Victoria signing up soon after on 10 December.**

Under the agreement, the Australian Government will provide funding to states and territories to support access to preschool.

The agreement:

- supports children to attend 15 hours of preschool each week in the year before school
- ensures all children benefit from Commonwealth funding regardless of the setting they attend
- aims to improve preschool enrolment and attendance
- maximises the benefit of preschool by improving outcomes for children.

The agreement will run from 2022 to 2025. It is expected to support more than 300,000 children and 12,000 preschool providers each year.

It is hoped that other states and territories will join in the near future.



[Read the joint media release.](#)

[Read the Preschool Reform Agreement.](#)

## Update: CCS provider approval applications

### New CCS application exclusion period

**There are new rules when a provider's CCS approval is refused or cancelled.**

If a provider's approval is refused or cancelled because they don't meet fit and proper requirements, they must wait 18 months before reapplying.

This change will:

- improve the quality of CCS applications
- increase the integrity and efficiency of the assessment process.

[Learn more about fit and proper requirements in the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

### High volume of CCS provider applications

**We are currently experiencing a high volume of CCS applications and this is impacting our assessment timelines.**

There are things you can do when applying to help us process your application quickly:

- ensure you include all the mandatory information and documents as we can't assess incomplete applications
- respond promptly if we request more information.

To find out how to apply, and what you need to include in your application, [visit our website](#).

## Register as a Be You Learning Community

**Mental health and wellbeing in early learning services involves the whole learning community.**

Be You can help you involve leaders, educators, children, their families, and the wider community in supporting wellbeing.

Registering as a [Be You Learning Community](#) gives you access to the full range of professional learning resources. This includes planning and implementation tools and consultant support.

Be You Consultants can:

- guide you through [Be You resources](#)
- facilitate networking opportunities, [sessions and events](#)



- support you to prepare for and respond to [critical incidents](#).

[Registering as a Be You Learning Community](#) is free.

## Handy resource

The CCS Helpdesk will close for the 2021–22 Christmas/New Year period. [We have information on our website](#) about session reports, attendances, absences and closures.

[Learn about the shutdown](#).

## Good to know

We've updated [the Child Care Provider Handbook](#) to reflect recent changes to CCS. Access the online and print friendly versions of the handbook on our website.

[Go to the Child Care Provider Handbook](#)



## We're removing the annual cap on Friday

We're removing the annual cap for all families who get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) from Friday 10 December.

Families earning more than \$190,015 currently have an annual subsidy cap of \$10,655 per child each financial year.

This cap will be removed from Friday. Families don't need to do anything for the change to occur.

### Share the news with families

We've developed content you can easily share across your channels to help families understand what is changing. [Find prewritten text and images on our website.](#)

[There's also a poster to display at your service.](#)

### Watch video for providers

Watch this [short video](#) to learn more about the changes to CCS.

### More information

[Learn more about the changes to CCS on our website.](#)

## Video: charging fees



[Watch this video](#) to ensure you submit accurate and complete session reports, including the correct fee, for each session of care.

There are two important rules about the fees you charge families for providing care and which you must report to the government:

1. Families must make a co-contribution to their child care fees. They do this by paying the difference between the provider's fee and the CCS amount. This is known as the gap fee.
2. You must report the full hourly session fee you charge families, minus any discounts or third-party fee contributions.

Providers are required to keep and maintain records of any [third-party payments](#) received and how they are applied.

Providers must submit accurate and complete session reports, including the correct fee, for each session of care. The correct fee is essential to work out how much CCS parents are entitled to receive for each session.

[Learn more about offering discounts in the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

## Infringements and changes to your service

**In November we started issuing infringement notices to providers who haven't reported their fee information. These providers received a \$2,220 penalty each.**

Some providers haven't reported updated details of staff with management or control responsibilities. Like fee reporting, this is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

If we issue an infringement to a provider who has not reported their fee information and we become aware that the nominated staff with management or control details are incorrect, we may issue an additional infringement notice. This infringement will be for failing to notify us of the correct staff with management or control.

All reporting obligations are listed in [Appendix E of the Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

We also outline when you need to notify us of changes at your service [in this short video](#).

[To find out more about infringements, visit our website.](#)

## Inclusion Support Program applications

**We are currently experiencing a high volume of Inclusion Support Program applications.**

Applications for an Additional Educator may take up to 30 business days to process. We expect this timeframe will continue into the first quarter of 2022.

Please note, applications for vacation care will continue to be prioritised during the vacation care period.





We appreciate your patience during this time. Please email [InclusionSupportProgram@dese.gov.au](mailto:InclusionSupportProgram@dese.gov.au) if you have any questions.

## Financial help for very remote teachers

### **Do you run a Centre Based Day Care (CBDC) service in very remote Australia?**

The Australian Government supports teachers, including early childhood teachers, in very remote areas with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts.

We provide two types of assistance. We can:

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

[Check if your CBDC service is in a very remote area](#) and let your teachers know.

[Applications for indexation waivers](#) are open.

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

## Handy resource

The CCS Helpdesk will close for the 2021–22 Christmas/New Year period. [We have information on our website](#) about session reports, attendances, absences and closures.

[Learn about the shutdown.](#)

## Good to know

CCS balancing is underway for two financial years. We have [two short videos](#) to help providers better understand the process.

[Learn about balancing.](#)



## We're removing the annual cap

We're removing the annual cap for all families who get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) from Friday 10 December.

Families earning more than \$190,015 currently have an annual subsidy cap of \$10,655 per child each financial year.

This cap will be removed from 10 December. Families don't need to do anything for the change to occur.

### Share the news with families

We've developed content you can easily share across your channels to help families understand what is changing. [Find prewritten text and images on our website.](#)

[There's also a poster to display at your service.](#)

### More information

[Learn more about the changes to CCS on our website.](#)

## Video: Change of circumstances



You must tell us when certain things change in your organisation.

The four main types of changes you need to tell us about are:



1. advertised fee arrangements
2. service operations, such as changes to operating hours and days, number of vacancies, if the service stops operating
3. service location or contact details
4. employee changes, such as the name or contact details of a person with management or control of the provider, any person who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of any of the provider's approved child care services, staff details, staff that join or leave your services.

Different reporting deadlines apply depending on the change. You should tell us about any of the above changes as soon as possible.

[Watch this video to find out when you must notify us of changes to your service.](#)

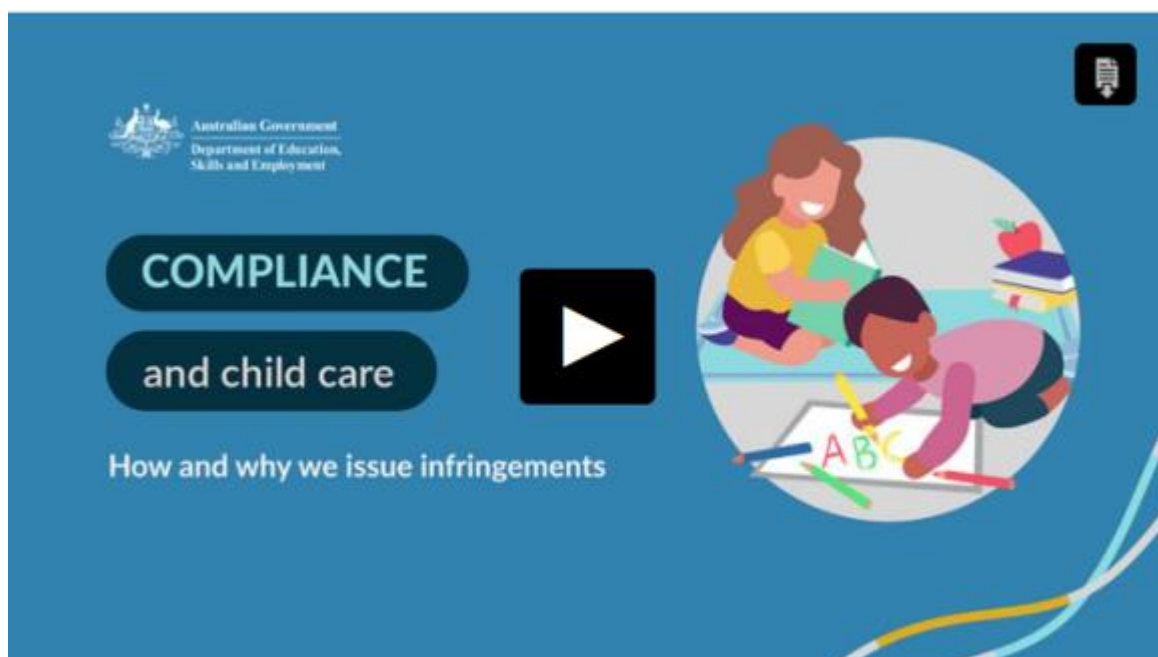
## Make sure your contact details are up-to-date

Ensure your fee and vacancy details are up to date on [Child Care Finder](#) to help families find your service.

Make sure you also update your contact details, including email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information.

You can update your details in the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or through your third-party software. For help, see the [task card on updating your details in the PEP](#) or contact your third-party software provider.

## Issuing infringements



Reporting fee information is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

We use this information to publish fees on [Child Care Finder](#) to help families find the care that best suits their needs.

Last week we started issuing infringements to providers who have not reported their fee information.

Report or update your fees through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. If you need help, see the [task card on reporting fees](#) in the PEP or contact your third-party software provider.

Please allow up to 24 hours for [Child Care Finder](#) to reflect changes.

When reporting your fees, you must report:

- current hourly or session fees before CCS, discounts or reductions
- any changes to fees (within 14 days of the change).

If your service has a range of fees (for example, per educator or age group), you can report a typical or average fee.

All reporting obligations are listed in Appendix E of the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

## See our new information videos on infringements:

- [How and why we issue infringements](#)
- [Importance of reporting fees](#).

[To find out more about infringements, visit our website.](#)

## Changes to StartingBlocks.gov.au

The way families find child care is changing.

From 7 February, 2022, we will publish your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Having this information in one place on the Starting Blocks website helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

Providers must still report their fees and information as required by Family Assistance Law through the [Provider Entry Point](#) or their third-party software.

More information will be available in coming weeks.



## CCS Helpdesk holiday shutdown

The Child Care Subsidy Helpdesk will close from **12.30pm (AEDT) on Friday 24 December 2021** and reopen at **9am (AEDT) on Tuesday 4 January 2022**.

There are some important things you need to know about session reports, attendances, absences and service closures during this period.

[Read the information on our website.](#)

## COVID-19 vaccinations

It's important to get information about [COVID-19 vaccines](#) in Australia from a trusted source. Stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines on the Department of Health website.

Business.gov.au has information about [COVID-19 vaccinations and your business](#).

Stay up to date with the latest COVID-19 vaccine requirements in your area on your state or territory COVID-19 response website.

Services Australia has [resources to help your staff and families get proof of their COVID-19 vaccinations](#).

## Handy resource

Help is available in the event of an emergency. We have [information on our website, including a short video](#).

[Watch the video.](#)

## Good to know

[International Day of People with Disability \(IDPWD\)](#) is held on 3 December each year. IDPWD is aimed at increasing public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability.

[Learn more.](#)



## What end of Katherine lockdown means for child care

Support for services and families affected by the COVID-19 lockdown in Katherine has now ended.

This follows the Northern Territory Government transitioning Katherine from a lockdown to a lockout from 12pm on Saturday 27 November.

Details are available on the [NT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

### Business continuity payments

Services in Katherine were eligible for a business continuity payment during the lockdown if they met conditions. These services will still get a payment for the fortnight 15 to 28 November.

### Waiving gap fees

Services in Katherine must resume charging gap fees from 28 November.

Until 30 June 2022, services can waive gap fees and get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if a child is unable to attend care because:

- they, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19
- the service, or a room at the service, is closed on advice from the state or territory government due to COVID-19
- the state or territory has restricted access to child care in a region due to COVID-19.

### COVID-19 absences

Regular absence provisions apply from 28 November.

Families have 10 extra allowable absences per child for the 2021-22 financial year. This brings the total number of allowable absences available to 52.

Go to our [COVID-19 webpage](#) for more information about support.

## What Lajamanu and Binjari lockdowns mean for child care

Support is available for families affected by the lockdowns in Lajamanu and Binjari.

Services can waive gap fees for children residing in this area who do not attend care during lockdown.



Additional allowable absences are available to families who live in Lajamanu and Binjari.

Services don't need to do anything to access these absences. They will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System.

[See dates this support starts and ends on our website.](#)



## Starting Blocks

### StartingBlocks.gov.au is changing in 2022

From 7 February 2022, your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions will be published on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au).

[StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) helps parents choose the best education and care for their family.

### What is changing for providers and services?

You must still report your fees and information as required by Family Assistance Law through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

When reporting your fees you must state:

- current hourly or session fees before Child Care Subsidy (CCS), discounts or reductions. If your service has a range of fees (for example, per educator or age group), you can report a typical or average fee.
- any changes to fees, and within 14 days of the change.

If you need help, [see the task card on reporting fees](#) in the PEP or contact your third-party software provider.

### What should I tell my families?

Encourage your families to visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to find out about quality early childhood education and care.

Let families know that on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) they will find:

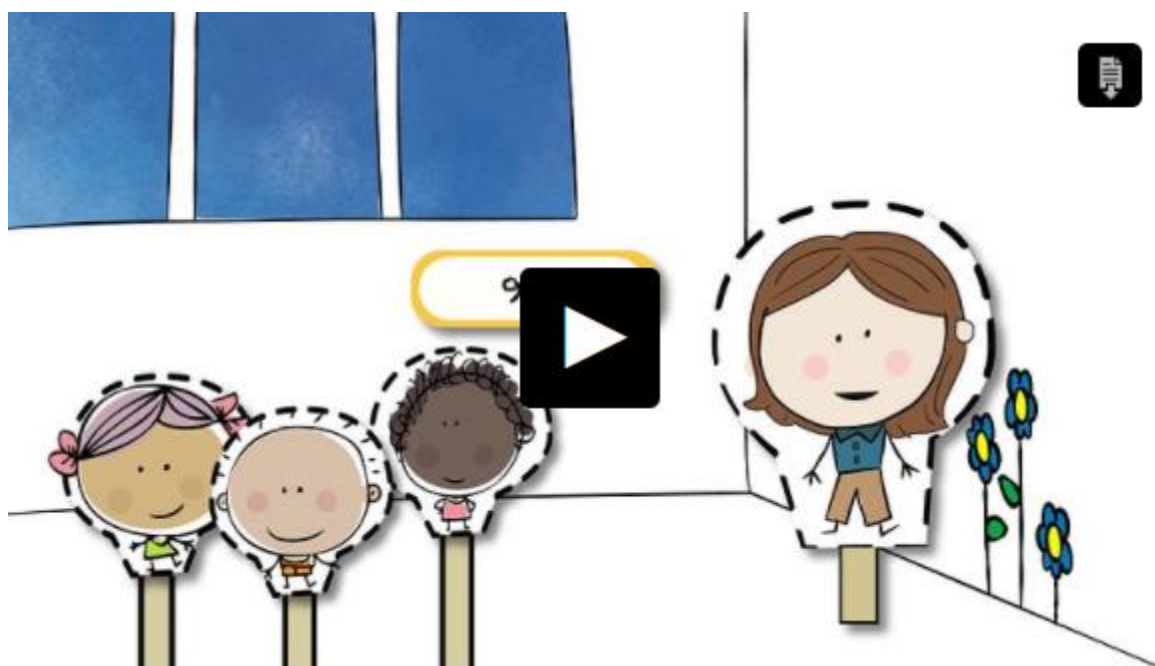
- local services and view their vacancies, costs, quality ratings and inclusions
- information and advice about education, children's development, and parenting.

[For more information, read our announcement.](#)





## Video: reporting actual attendance times



You must record children's actual in-and-out attendance times in both:

- statements of entitlements to families, and
- session reports entered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

This helps parents understand the relationship between the fee you charge, their Child Care Subsidy amount, and their gap fee.

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations, including:

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

[Watch this short video to ensure you report children's attendance times accurately.](#)

## Have your families confirmed their income?

Families must confirm their income each financial year to ensure they are paid the correct amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This process is called balancing.

CCS balancing is currently underway for two financial years. This week, Services Australia contacted families who have not taken the required action.



## What do families need to do?

### 2019–20 financial year

Most families confirmed their 2019–20 income before the first deadline on 30 June 2021.

Any families who still haven't confirmed their 2019–20 income must do so by 30 June 2022. If they don't, they may need to pay back all the CCS they got for 2019–20. Their CCS will cancel and they will need to lodge a new claim if they want to be paid CCS.

### 2020–21 financial year

All families must confirm their 2020–21 income by 30 June 2022. If they don't their CCS will stop and you'll need to charge them full fees for child care.

Services Australia will be able to start their payments again but only after families have confirmed their income.

## How to confirm income

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge.

## Resources

We have [resources on our website](#) you can share with families at your service. If families have questions about balancing, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

Watch our [short videos for providers](#) to better understand balancing.

## COVID-19 update

### Support for services in Northern Territory

Support is available for services and families affected by COVID-19 lockdowns in Katherine, Binjari and Rockhole in the Northern Territory.

Details about the lockdowns are on the [NT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

The following support applies to services and families in Katherine for the period 16 to 24 November:

- Services may be eligible for a business continuity payment if they meet conditions. We'll contact eligible providers soon. We'll use the provider-level email address listed in the Child Care Subsidy System. The payment will cover the fortnight 15 to 28 November.



- Services can submit session reports to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and waive gap fees for children who do not attend care during lockdown. You must accurately reflect this in a family's statement of entitlement.
- Additional allowable absences are available to families who live or attend care in Katherine. You don't need to do anything to access these absences. They will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System.

Stay up to date on available support, including Binjari and Rockhole, [on our website](#).

## General COVID-19 support

Families have 10 extra allowable absences per child for the 2021–22 financial year. This brings the total number of allowable absences available to 52.

Until 30 June 2022, services can waive gap fees and get CCS if a child is unable to attend care because:

- they, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19
- the service, or a room at the service, is closed on advice from the state or territory government due to COVID-19
- the state or territory has restricted access to child care in a region due to COVID-19.

## More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.](#)

[Visit our website for more information about COVID-19 support for the early childhood education and care sector.](#)

## Jobs Fairs: helping you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

Jobs Fairs are free face-to-face events that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies and to connect with employment service providers.

Job Fairs will be held in:

- Burnie, Tuesday 30 November 2021
- Hobart, Thursday 2 December 2021
- Perth, Wednesday 8 December 2021.

For more information or to become an exhibitor, [visit the exhibitor information page](#) or email [JobsFairs@dese.gov.au](mailto:JobsFairs@dese.gov.au).

We'll provide details on other job fairs across Australia.



The events follow COVID-safe event procedures.

## Wage support for trainees, apprentices

Early childhood education and care services who take on trainees may be eligible for the Australian Government wage subsidy, Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements.

Eligible employers can receive a subsidy of 50% of a trainee's gross wages. The subsidy will pay up to \$7,000 per quarter for wages paid in the 12-month period from commencement.

You may be eligible if you engage a new trainee before 31 March 2022 who:

- is undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification, including Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care, and
- has a training contract formally approved by the state training authority.

Exclusions and existing worker eligibility apply.

[Learn more about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

## Handy resource

Find all our previous early childhood updates on our [announcements page](#).

## Good to know

Services can take steps to mitigate the impacts of an emergency. We have [useful resources on our website](#), including a short video.



## Infringements and reporting fees

This month, we will issue a small number of infringements to providers who have not reported their fee information.

Reporting fee information is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

We publish fees on Child Care Finder to help families find the care that best suits their needs.

At this time, we won't be sending infringements to providers in regions heavily affected by COVID-19.

Report or update your fees through the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software. If you need help, see the task card on reporting fees in the PEP or contact your third-party software provider.

Please allow up to 24 hours for [Child Care Finder](#) to reflect changes.

When reporting your fees, you must report:

- current hourly or session fees before Child Care Subsidy (CCS), discounts or reductions
- any changes to fees (within 14 days of the change).

If your service has a range of fees (for example, per educator or age group), you can report a typical or average fee.

All reporting obligations are listed in Appendix E of the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

[To find out more about infringements, visit our website.](#)

## Changes to StartingBlocks.gov.au

The way families find child care is changing.

From February 7, 2022, we will publish your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Having this information in one place on the Starting Blocks website helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

Providers must still report their fees and information as required by Family Assistance Law through the [Provider Entry Point](#) or their third-party software.

We'll provide more information in the weeks and months ahead.



## New: compliance video series



We've got a [series of short, animated videos](#) to help you understand your obligations under Family Assistance Law.

Topics include:

- recording and reporting sessions of care
- charging fees
- what checks you and your staff need
- when to tell us if things change
- the rules about caring for relatives, including your own children or siblings.

These videos have also been translated into 11 languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Dinka, French, Hazaragi, Nuer, Somali, and Sudanese Arabic.

If you receive CCS, you must ensure you, your services, relevant staff and educators comply with their obligations.

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations, including:

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

[Watch these short videos](#), review the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) and do a quick compliance check-up to ensure you are meeting all of your obligations.



## Preparing for an emergency

Summer in Australia has traditionally been a time of severe weather events, including bushfires, floods, storms and droughts.

In preparation, we encourage you look at our [help in an emergency webpage and start planning](#).

On this page:

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

## COVID-19 update

### Northern Territory

Services in the Katherine and Robinson River can [check this table](#) for information on what support is available while restrictions are in place.

### ACT, NSW, and Victoria

As lockdowns end, it is important you talk to families at your service about their plans to return to care.

**If a family does not intend to return to care, you must take action as soon as possible. If you don't, you may get a debt on behalf of the family.**

[Read instructions on the action you must take to prevent a debt.](#)

## Annual cap removed in December

From 10 December 2021, we're removing the annual cap for all families who get the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Families earning more than \$190,015 (2021–22 terms) currently have an annual subsidy cap of \$10,655 per child each financial year.

### What do families need to do?

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything.



If a family has already reached the CCS annual cap before 10 December, their CCS may have stopped. Services Australia will automatically reassess their CCS entitlement for this time. They will backpay CCS for affected sessions of care.

## What do providers need to do?

Providers don't need to do anything. Services Australia is working with software providers to implement the change.

[Learn more about the changes to CCS on our website.](#)

## Handy resource

This week is [International Fraud Awareness Week](#). Join the global effort to minimise the impact of fraud by promoting anti-fraud awareness and education.

[Learn what you can do.](#)

## Good to know

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

[Find out how you can get involved.](#)





## COVID-19 in Northern Territory: extra support for child care as Katherine lockdown extended

Services and families in Katherine and Robinson River in the Northern Territory are eligible for COVID-19 support during lockdown.

Details about the lockdown are on the [NT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

### Support available

The following support is available for the duration of the Katherine lockdown, which is currently **16 to 22 November**.

Services in Katherine can submit session reports to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and **waive gap fees** for children that do not attend care during lockdown.

If you waive gap fees, you must accurately reflect this in a family's statement of entitlement.

**Additional allowable absences** are available to families that live or attend care in Katherine. This means families won't have to use any of their allowable absences during lockdown.

You don't need to do anything to access these absences. They will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System.

For families and services in **Robinson River**, gap fees can be waived from **16 to 18 November**.

### General COVID-19 support

All Australian families have 10 extra allowable absences per child for the 2021–22 financial year. This brings the total number of allowable absences available to 52.

Until 30 June 2022, services can waive gap fees and get CCS if a child is unable to attend care because:

- they, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19
- the service, or a room at the service, is closed on advice from the state or territory government due to COVID-19
- the state or territory has restricted access to child care in a region due to COVID-19.

### More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.](#)

[Visit our website for more information about COVID-19 support for the early childhood education and care sector.](#)



## Action required: talk to families about enrolments to avoid debts

As lockdowns end, it is important you talk to families at your service about their plans to return to care.

**If a family does not intend to return to care, you must take action as soon as possible. If you don't, you may get a debt on behalf of the family.**

### Support to end enrolments after lockdown

We don't usually pay Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for any days after the last day a child physically attends.

However, we will pay CCS for absences after a child's last physical attendance for up to 28 days after a COVID-19 hotspot ends, for hotspots that lasted more than 7 days.

**But you must take action to avoid a debt.**

### Action for providers

1. Speak to families about their intentions to return.
2. Identify any families who want to end their enrolment.
3. Identify if the planned enrolment end date falls during a COVID-19 hotspot of more than 7 days or within 28 days of the hotspot ending (see key dates below).
4. If the above criteria is met, record an attendance on the last day of the child's enrolment. Use the following details when recording the session:
  - **session fee:** \$0
  - **session start time:** 10.00 pm to 10.15 pm (or another 15-minute period if this time conflicts with an absence)
  - **session description:** COVID-19 last day of care.

If you don't end a child's enrolment as per the steps above, and the child continues to not attend care, you may get a debt on behalf of the family.

### Key dates to end enrolments in each region

Families who want to end their enrolment must do so within 28 days of the hotspot ending. The below dates indicate when this occurs in each area.



## New South Wales

- 8 November

## Victoria

- **Metropolitan Melbourne:** 18 November
- **Mildura:** 18 November
- **Mitchell Shire:** 10 November
- **Rest of Victoria:** 7 October

## Australian Capital Territory

- 15 November

While some of these dates have passed, it's not too late for providers to end the enrolment and avoid a debt.

You can submit a \$0 session per the instructions for any eligible enrolment that ended within 28 days of the COVID-19 hotspot in your area, and CCS will be repaid. You must ensure the family receives the benefit of this payment.

You can end an enrolment for a date in the past if the family agrees. If you have submitted session reports after the enrolment end date, you will have to withdraw these before ending the enrolment.

## What should I tell families?

We encourage you to [share this article from Services Australia](#) with families at your service.



## Fee reporting infringements

From late November, we will issue a small number of infringements to providers who have not reported their fee information.

Reporting fee information is one of the requirements under Family Assistance Law. We publish fees on [Child Care Finder](#) to help families find the care that best suits their needs.

We won't be sending infringements at the moment to providers in regions that have been heavily affected by COVID-19.

Report or update your fees through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or through your third-party software. For help, see the [task card on updating your details](#) in the PEP or contact your third-party software provider.

When reporting your fees you must report:

- current hourly or session fees before CCS, discounts or reductions
- any changes to fees (within 14 days of the change).

If you have a range of fees (for example, per educator or age group), you can report a typical or average fee.

All reporting obligations are listed in [Appendix E of the Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

[To find out more about infringements visit our website.](#)

## Changes to Innovative Solution Support

The Inclusion Support Program (ISP) provides assistance for eligible child care services to address barriers to inclusion.

Through ISP, [Innovative Solutions Support](#) can fund innovative, flexible and responsive solutions to these barriers. It can also help services carry out inclusive practices.

### What is changing?

From 14 September until 30 June 2022, eligible services can apply for a maximum of \$10,000 (inclusive of GST) for Innovative Solutions projects.

This also applies in the following circumstances:

- services who want to apply more than once
- applications from a group of services
- applications from Family Day Care services.



We do not consider your application new if:

- you submitted an application to the Inclusion Development Fund Manager before 14 September 2021, and
- that application was returned to the service through the IS Portal for follow up information.

For more information or if you have questions, please email [InclusionSupportProgram@dese.gov.au](mailto:InclusionSupportProgram@dese.gov.au).

## COVID-19: stay up to date

As the situation continues to change, it's important to keep up to date with how COVID-19 restrictions affect child care in your area.

We have information about support measures that are available, including access to business continuity payments, additional allowable absences, and gap fee waiving.

Services in the Northern Territory can [check this table](#) for information on what support is available while restrictions are in place.

[Check our website often to stay informed.](#)

## Update from ACECQA

### National Quality Framework report

Each quarter ACECQA releases a National Quality Framework (NQF) snapshot report which summarises quality rating results for services that work under the NQF.

The most recent snapshot released in October shows that 86% of services are rated as 'Meeting National Quality Standard' – a great result for the sector.

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

### Update to NQA portal – new reports available

ACECQA's [NQA IT System portal](#) now enables NQF Approved Providers to run new reports in user-friendly formats on:

- applications and notifications submitted by a provider
- applications and notifications submitted by a service
- a list of nominated supervisors for each service belonging to a provider
- statutory compliance actions, including show-cause notices, sent to providers in the last two years.

Provider reports are on the provider details page. Service level application and notification reports are on the service details page.



## Future of Work Program

We have partnered with BHP to deliver the [Future of Work Program](#) which aims to build a stronger regional workforce for the future.

If you have staff members currently enrolled or considering enrolling in a short course, they may be eligible to have their student fee covered.

The program is available to students who live in the following regional areas:

- Bowen Basin and Mackay, Queensland
- Roxby Downs and Upper Spencer Gulf, South Australia
- The Pilbara and Goldfields, Western Australia
- Hunter Region, New South Wales.

Successful students will have their student contribution fee covered for Short Courses with a Commonwealth Supported Place.

Expressions of interest are open for the program for 2022.

If you have questions about the program, email [applications@regionalfutureofwork.com](mailto:applications@regionalfutureofwork.com).

[Find short courses on Course Seeker.](#)

[Discover more about the Future of Work program.](#)

## Upcoming Job Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies, and connect with employment service providers.

Job Fairs will be held in:

- Murraylands, South Australia, Friday 12 November 2021
- Townsville, Monday 15 November 2021
- Alice Springs, Tuesday 16 November 2021
- Burnie, Tuesday 30 November 2021
- Hobart, Thursday 2 December 2021.

For more information or to become an exhibitor, [visit the exhibitor information page](#) or email [JobsFairs@dese.gov.au](mailto:JobsFairs@dese.gov.au).

We'll provide details on other job fairs across Australia.



The events follow COVID-safe event procedures.

## Wellbeing resources

Be You provides a range of free wellbeing tools for learning communities and educators to support staff. Resources include:

- [information on staff wellbeing](#)
- [templates for educator wellbeing plans](#)
- [downloadable booklets](#)
- [help supporting your community during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

When learning communities support staff wellbeing it has a positive impact on staff retention, job satisfaction and productivity, as well as on outcomes for children.

Explore [the Be You website](#), or follow the [Be You Learning Community on Facebook](#).

## Handy resource

The [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#) has useful information for providers and services who administer ACCS payments.

[Go to the guide.](#)

## Good to know

The Australian Government has a range of initiatives to support the early childhood sector attract and retain high-quality teachers and educators. We list [workforce programs](#) relevant to the sector on our website.

[Go to workforce page](#)



## Australian Government COVID-19 support measures for child care extended to next June

**The Australian Government has announced it will provide support for early childhood and education care services until 30 June 2022 because of the continued impact of COVID-19.**

The additional support relates to:

- absences
- gap fee waivers
- enrolments.

### Absences

Children will have 10 extra allowable absences for the 2021–22 financial year. This is on top of the standard 42 allowable absences and the additional allowable absences provided for families previously in a COVID-19 hotspot. These will be applied automatically.

If a state or territory restricts access to child care in a region for more than 7 days, more absences will be provided.

### Gap fee waivers

Services can now waive gap fees for a child that does not attend care because they, or a member of their household, have been directed to isolate due to COVID-19.

This will apply for the duration of the isolation period as specified by the health advice.

Services can also waive gap fees and receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) where a child cannot attend care because the service, or a room within a service, is closed due to COVID-19 on advice from the state or territory government. This will apply for the duration of the closure outlined in the advice.

Services can continue to waive gap fees for children not attending care where a state or territory restricts access to child care in a region. This will apply from day one of restrictions (with any duration of time being eligible).

### Children returning to care after lockdown

We encourage you to talk to your families about their plans for their child to return to care after lockdown.

Families in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory who are not returning to care can end their child's enrolment up to 28 days after a COVID-19 hotspot ends without attending their last day in person.





This ensures families don't incur large CCS debts for any days after the child last physically attends.

[Find out more about what you need to do.](#)

## More information

[Visit our website for more information.](#)



## Welcome to our new-look newsletter

We've made improvements to our weekly newsletter and we hope you like them.

Every Wednesday, we send important information and updates for the early childhood education and care sector.

We also send targeted updates to states and territories when required, like in times of emergency.

You're receiving this because:

- your contact details are registered in the Child Care Subsidy System, or
- you previously signed up to our mailing list.

This new-look newsletter reflects the feedback we've received from providers, services and stakeholders about the helpfulness of our email notifications.

### Help us reach you

To ensure you don't miss important updates, make sure your [subscription preferences](#) are up to date.

In particular, let us know what states and territories, and care types you'd like to receive information about.

Providing these details will help us get you the information you need, when you need it.

[Manage your subscription preferences.](#)

### We want to hear from you

You can now let us know if you found our newsletter helpful. Providing this feedback will help us make further improvements to our communications.

You can provide feedback in the 'Have your say' section below.

### Share this email

Know anyone who hasn't subscribed? [Tell them to join our mailing list.](#)

## We're removing the annual cap next month

The first phase of our changes to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is approaching.

From **10 December 2021**, we're removing the annual cap for all families who get CCS.



Families earning more than \$190,015 (2021–22 terms) currently have an annual subsidy cap of \$10,655 per child each financial year.

## What do families need to do?

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything.

If a family has already reached the CCS annual cap before 10 December, its CCS may have stopped. Services Australia will automatically reassess the family's CCS entitlement for this time. They will back pay CCS for affected sessions of care.

## What do providers need to do?

Providers don't need to do anything. Services Australia is working with software providers to implement the change.

## When does CCS increase for families with more than one child in care?

Families with more than one child in care will get a higher subsidy for their second child and younger children from **7 March 2022**.

[Learn more about the changes to CCS on our website.](#)

## Issuing infringements

Soon, we will issue infringements to providers that don't follow the rules under Family Assistance Law.

An infringement is a fine, like a parking ticket.

Infringements help providers avoid more severe penalties. They allow a provider to pay a small fine rather than go to court, where they may get a much larger penalty.

To receive Child Care Subsidy, providers have a range of administrative and reporting obligations. Good business administration and reporting helps the Government's goals of the Child Care Subsidy be met. It is also essential to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most providers comply with the law and do the right thing. However, we'll now be focusing more on some specific contraventions. Over the coming months, we'll provide education and use infringements to help improve compliance.

[Visit our website to find out more about infringements.](#)

You can also read more about administrative and reporting obligations in [Appendix E of the Child Care Provider Handbook](#).



## Focus on fee reporting

Reporting fee information is a requirement under Family Assistance Law. We publish fees on [Child Care Finder](#) to help families find the care that best suits their needs.

From late November, we will issue a small number of infringements to providers who have not reported their fee information.

We won't be sending infringements at the moment to providers in regions that have been heavily affected by COVID-19 recently.

We will provide more information about fee reporting in this newsletter in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, you should check if you have reported your fees through 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 software provider.

## Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies, and connect with employment service providers.

Job Fairs will be held in:

- Adelaide, Wednesday 10 November 2021
- Murraylands, Friday 12 November 2021
- Townsville, Monday 15 November 2021
- Alice Springs, Tuesday 16 November 2021
- Burnie, Tuesday 30 November 2021
- Hobart, Thursday 2 December 2021.

For more information or to become an exhibitor, [visit the exhibitor information page](#) or email [JobsFairs@dese.gov.au](mailto:JobsFairs@dese.gov.au).

We'll provide details on other job fairs across Australia.

The events follow COVID-safe event procedures.

## Handy resource

CCS balancing is underway for two financial years. We have [two short videos](#) to help providers better understand the process.



[Learn about balancing.](#)

## Good to know

It's important to keep up to date with how COVID-19 restrictions affect child care in your area. We have information about support on [our website](#).

[Go to COVID-19 page.](#)



## COVID-19 update: support for ending enrolments after lockdown

Families can now end their child's enrolment up to 28 days after a COVID-19 hotspot ends without attending their last day in person.

When a child's enrolment ends, we don't usually pay Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for any days after the last day the child physically attends.

This rule, however, won't now apply when an enrolment ends during a COVID-19 hotspot of more than 7 days, or 28 days after the hotspot ends.

### What this change means for providers and families

Many children have stayed home during extended lockdowns in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory.

Families have been supported to continue their child's enrolment during this period. As lockdowns end, we encourage you to talk to your families about their plans for their child to return to care.

To support services and families ending enrolments after lockdown, CCS can continue to be paid for absences after a child's last attendance, up to 28 days after the end of a COVID-19 hotspot.

While families will not incur a CCS debt for this 28-day period, services will still be required to resume charging gap fees when restrictions to child care lift - or school in the case of Outside School Hours Care services.

To find out what a service is eligible for visit our [early childhood COVID-19 support by region](#) webpage. Here we list regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.

### If families choose to unenroll from care

If families choose to unenroll their child from care, they need to do so by the following dates to avoid incurring a CCS debt for absences after last attendance:

- NSW – 8 November
- Metropolitan Melbourne – 18 November
- Regional Victoria\* – 7 October (some regions excepted)
- ACT – 15 November.

\* There are some later exceptions where regions went back into lockdown.

### What do providers need to do?

1. Identify any enrolments that may be eligible.



2. Record an attendance for the child on the last day of the enrolment, ensuring that:
  - a. the session fee is \$0
  - b. the session start time is 10:00pm and end time is 10:15pm
  - c. the session description is 'COVID-19 last day of care'.

3. Advise families of the action taken and ensure they receive the benefit of the payments.

If the \$0 session time conflicts with an absence, change the start and end times to any other time in the day where there is no conflict.

If the session conflicts with an actual attendance, you don't need to do anything; this policy does not affect you.

It's important providers and services comply with their responsibilities under Family Assistance Law. If they cannot pass on the payment as a fee reduction, they should contact families and make arrangements to pay them directly.



## StartingBlocks.gov.au: find child care

### The way families find child care is changing

From 7 February 2022, your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions will be published on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au).

This information will stop being published on the Child Care Finder website from June 2023.

[StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) helps parents choose the best education and care for their family.

Families can:

- find local services and view their vacancies, costs, quality ratings and inclusions
- get information and advice about education, children's development, and parenting.

Having this information in one place helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

### What is changing for providers and services?

You must still report your fees and information as required by Family Assistance Law through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

When reporting your fees you must report:

- current hourly or session fees before CCS, discounts or reductions
- any changes to fees (within 14 days of the change).

For help see the [task card on reporting fees in the PEP](#) or contact your software provider.

### What do I need to do?

We'll provide more information and resources to share with staff and families in the weeks and months ahead.

## COVID-19 support: stay up to date

We regularly update [our website](#) to reflect important information about COVID-19 support in your region.

As circumstances change it's important that you keep up to date with the support measures available to your service.

We have information on:





- additional allowable absences
- waiving gap fees
- business continuity payments
- support by region, which includes when support measures begin and end.

We recently updated [our support by region page](#) with information for services in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory.

## Tips about online security

COVID-19 lockdowns bring an increased risk of fraudulent and malicious online activity from inside and outside your organisations.

There are things you can do to reduce the risk of a security breach.

Visit [the Australian Cyber Security Centre's website](#).

## System maintenance this weekend

Services Australia will undertake scheduled maintenance of its IT systems this weekend.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm AEDT Saturday 30 October to 10am AEDT Sunday 31 October.

Providers and services will be unable to enter session reports during this period.



## Local Area Emergency declared for child care services in Coffs Harbour

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period 21 October to 7 November 2021 following severe storms. This LAE includes all child care services in the [Coffs Harbour Local Government Area \(LGA\)](#).

A range of support is available to services and families during an LAE.

### Support for families

Families attending services in the Coffs Harbour LGA can use additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their 42 absence days. Most families will still have absences available. Additional absences were provided to them during COVID-19 restrictions.

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

The Australian Government provides a range of payments and services to individuals affected by a major disaster. [Services Australia has more information about emergency payments](#).

Families looking for alternative care during an emergency can visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

### Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

### If you have to close

You must let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

### For action

- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details in Child Care Finder. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.



- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's emergency site](#) for current emergency information in your region.

## More information

[Visit our website for more information about help before, during and after an emergency.](#)



## COVID-19: stay up to date with support

We regularly update [our website](#) to reflect important information about Australian Government support for services in your region affected by COVID-19.

As circumstances change it's important that you stay in touch with the support measures available to your service. We have information on:

- additional allowable absences
- gap fees
- business continuity payments
- support by region, which includes the dates that support begins and ends.

Please check back often.

## Have your say on new learning resource

We are developing a learning management system (LMS), which will provide compliance learning resources for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector.

The LMS will include:

- access to compliance eLearning modules and education products, such as videos and fact sheets
- tailored programs for providers and educators
- printable learning history and certificates for completed courses.

We are inviting you to take part in our user reference group, which will help shape the design, content, and delivery of the LMS and our learning resources.

We have 200 participants from across the sector and we're welcoming new members.

If you would like to be involved, please [send us an email](#) by **27 October 2021** to express your interest.

## Extension of provisions for IHC educators

Minister for Education and Youth Alan Tudge has approved the extension of the transitional provisions for In Home Care (IHC) educators working in remote and very remote areas until 31 December 2023.

This means IHC educators working in remote and very remote areas will have an additional two years to earn their qualification.



This ensures that educators are available to support remote families who cannot access mainstream child care.

Updated IHC national guidelines will be available on our website soon.



## Action required: enrolments in Greater Melbourne and \$0 session of care

Services Australia recorded a \$0 session of care today (Monday 18 October) for children enrolled at services in Greater Melbourne.

Families that live in Greater Melbourne but attend care outside of Greater Melbourne will also have a \$0 session of care recorded for their child's enrolment.

This will ensure enrolments remain active during lockdown.

Services in Greater Melbourne must take action.

### What you need to do

Services Australia has applied the \$0 session of care at the child's usual service at 12:01am to 12:30am on Monday 18 October 2021.

Please confirm the \$0 session is there.

If it's not, please follow the instructions below to add it.

If you vary a session report for the week starting Monday 18 October, you must re-enter the \$0 session of care in that report unless you are recording actual attendances for that child in that week.

If you vary the session report and do not replace the \$0 session of care where a child did not attend, their enrolment will cease 14 weeks after their last attendance.

### How to add the \$0 session

- Enter a \$0 session of care for 12.01 am to 12.30 am on Monday 18 October
- State 'COVID-19 service update' in the session description to distinguish this from the original Services Australia entry.

You can only do this if your service is in one of the [Local Government Areas listed on our website](#). This activity will be monitored through compliance checks.

[Learn more about what is happening today.](#)

## COVID-19 support in Victoria

We regularly update [our website](#) to reflect important information about COVID-19 support in your region.



As circumstances change it's important that you keep up to date with the support measures available to your service. We have information on:

- additional allowable absences
- gap fees
- business continuity payments
- support by region, which includes the date support measures begin and end.

Please check our website often.

## Update your contact details

It's never been more important that your contact details are up to date in case we or Services Australia need to get in touch.

Making sure your phone number and email address are saved in the Provider Entry Point (PEP) means that you won't miss important information if we need to contact you.

- You can update your details via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- For help to do this go to [How to view and update organisation details in the PEP on our website](#), or contact your software provider.



## COVID-19 in Tasmania: what southern Tasmania hotspot means for child care

Child care services in parts of Tasmania can access Australian Government support following [the Commonwealth hotspot declaration on 15 October](#).

Details about the three-day lockdown in southern Tasmanian Local Government Areas, including Hobart, are available on the [Tasmania Government COVID-19 response website](#).

### Support available

Services in Tasmania can waive gap fees for families who kept their children at home during the lockdown.

Families can get Child Care Subsidy when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year.

### More information

We regularly update [our website](#) to reflect important information about COVID-19 support in your region.

As circumstances change it's important that you keep up to date with the support measures available to your service. We have information on:

- additional allowable absences
- gap fees
- business continuity payments
- support by region, which includes the date support measures begin and end.

Please check our website often.

## Update your contact details

It's never been more important that your contact details are up to date in case we or Services Australia need to get in touch.

Making sure your phone number and email address are saved in the Provider Entry Point (PEP) means that you won't miss important information if we need to contact you.

- You can update your details via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- For help to do this go to [How to view and update organisation details in the PEP on our website](#), or contact your software provider.





14 October 2021 – targeted update

## COVID-19 in NSW: updated information on Australian Government support

We've updated [our website](#) to reflect recent advice about Australian Government COVID-19 support in NSW.

The [COVID-19 support by region webpage](#) is the best way to find out if your service is eligible for support.

Dates on this page are dependent on when health orders and advice are published by states, territories and the Chief Medical Officer.

Please monitor our website closely, as we update it regularly.



## COVID-19 in Victoria: updated information on Australian Government Support

We've updated [our website](#) to reflect recent advice about Australian Government COVID-19 support in Victoria.

The [COVID-19 support by region webpage](#) is the best way to find out if your service is eligible for support.

Dates on this page are dependent on when health orders and advice are published by states, territories and the Chief Medical Officer.

Please monitor our website closely, as we update it regularly.

### Business continuity payment update

Services in Metropolitan Melbourne that opted-in will get business continuity payments until the Victorian Government lifts restrictions around access to child care. This is currently expected to be 5 November 2021.

This means the end of the payments will not be contingent on a Commonwealth hotspot declaration. Services must still meet the other payment conditions.

Child care is not currently restricted in regional Victoria areas that are out of lockdown.

We will soon update our website with this information.

## Eased restrictions in Mitchell Shire

Changes to Australian Government support apply to services in Mitchell Shire following [the lifting of the COVID-19 hotspot from 11.59pm on 13 October](#).

Details about the eased restrictions are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

The following changes apply to services in Mitchell Shire:

- Regular absence provisions apply from today (14 October). That is, families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year.
- Services that opted-in in will get a final business continuity payment for the fortnight 4 to 17 October as the restrictions on child care will lift in Mitchell Shire.
- OSHC services will continue to receive business continuity payments until all primary school students can return to school in person on 26 October, they will get a final business continuity payment for the fortnight 18 to 31 October.



- Services getting business continuity payments must waive gap fees for children not attending until the end of the payment fortnight. They must resume charging fees from 18 October.
- Services that are not getting business continuity payments must resume charging gap fees from today (14 October).

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

## Reminder: enrolments in Greater Melbourne

Services Australia will record a \$0 session of care on Monday 18 October for children enrolled at services in Greater Melbourne. This will ensure enrolments remain active during lockdown.

**Services in Melbourne must take action on Monday.**

### What you need to do

Services Australia will apply the \$0 session of care at the child's usual service from 12:01am to 12:30am on Monday 18 October 2021.

If your service is in Greater Melbourne, please confirm the \$0 session is there after this time. If it's not, please follow the instructions below to add it.

If you vary a session report for the week starting Monday 18 October, you must re-enter the \$0 session of care in that report unless you are recording actual attendances for that child in that week. See instructions below to add the \$0 session.

If you vary the session report and do not replace the \$0 session of care where a child did not attend, their enrolment will cease 14 weeks after their last attendance.

### How to add the \$0 session

- Enter a \$0 session of care for 12.01 am to 12.30 am on 18 October
- State 'COVID-19 service update' in the session description to distinguish this from the original Services Australia entry.

You can only do this if your service is in one of the [Local Government Areas listed on our website](#). This activity will be monitored through compliance checks.

[Learn more about what will happen on Monday.](#)



## Shaping our Future: new 10-year national workforce strategy released

A new 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy has been released. It aims to foster a sustainable and high-quality workforce of early childhood teachers and educators for the future.

The strategy, Shaping our Future, was facilitated by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and co-designed with:

- the early childhood education and care sector
- Australian Government
- all state and territory governments
- education and training providers
- peak organisations
- regulatory bodies.

[Read the national workforce strategy on ACECQA's website.](#)

### Actions to attract, support and retain staff

The strategy outlines short, medium and long-term actions across important focus areas of:

- professional recognition
- attraction and attention
- leadership and capability
- wellbeing
- qualifications and career pathways
- data and evidence.

These actions build on the significant investment by all governments and the sector to date in workforce-related initiatives.

### Roadmap for meeting future needs

The strategy provides a roadmap to creating a more sustainable and skilled workforce.

It acknowledges the growing demand for early childhood teachers and educators.

It targets complex and long-standing issues associated with attracting, developing and retaining a high-quality workforce.



## Next steps

All governments and the sector are collectively responsible for implementing the strategy.

Governments and sector stakeholders will work together on implementation to achieve the strategy's aims.

The strategy is designed to be a living document. Regular monitoring will ensure it can adapt and respond to emerging workforce challenges over the next 10 years.



## COVID-19: stay up to date

We regularly update [our website](#) to reflect important information about COVID-19 support in your region.

As circumstances change it's important that you keep up to date with the support measures available to your service. We have information on:

- Additional allowable absences
- Gap fees
- Business continuity payments
- Support by region, which includes the date support measures begin and end.

Please check back often.

## Higher CCS for multiple children

We're making changes to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to help families who currently pay the most and experience the biggest barriers to participation in work.

**From 10 December 2021, we're removing the annual cap for all families who get CCS.**

**From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child in care will get a higher subsidy.**

These changes were announced in the 2021–22 Budget. We're implementing the changes earlier than initially announced to provide more support to families sooner.

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

## Be You: become a Learning Community

Be You is a national mental health initiative supporting the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people in early learning services, school age care services, primary schools, and secondary schools.

Be You offers a [range of professional learning resources](#) for educators to use.

You can also become a Be You Learning Community – an early learning service or school which has committed to a whole learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

[The best way to become a Be You Learning Community is to sign up.](#)

Be You is available at no cost and is funded by the Australian Government.



[Explore everything Be You has to offer on their website.](#)

## Free or low-fee training

The JobTrainer Fund is providing free or low-fee additional training places for job seekers and young people, including school leavers, to upskill or reskill in areas of need.

Educators can choose from a range of accredited diplomas, certificates or short courses.

Available courses in early childhood education and care include:

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30113)
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC50113).

Available courses may differ across states and territories.

A list of occupations, training courses and providers is available on the [My Skills website](#).

Further information on JobTrainer is available on the [Your Career website](#).

## Update your contact details

It's never been more important that your contact details are up to date in case we or Services Australia need to get in touch.

Making sure your phone number and email address are saved in the Provider Entry Point (PEP) means that you won't miss important information if we need to contact you during an emergency, such as a COVID outbreak.

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

For help to do this go to [How to view and update organisation details in the PEP on our website](#), or contact your software provider.

## National Children's Week is in October

We are proud supporters of Children's Week, which takes place 23 to 31 October.

This year's theme is 'children have the right to choose their own friends and safely connect with others'.

Early education and child care services play an important role in children's social development, and this is often where children begin forming friendships.

A range of events and activities has been organised across the country. These focus the attention of the wider community on children, their needs and achievements.

[Find out what is happening in your state or territory and how you can get involved.](#)



## COVID-19 in the ACT: gap fee waiving and extra absences available to child care services

Gap fee waiving and additional allowable absences are now available to all services in the Australian Capital Territory until the ACT Government lifts restrictions around access to child care.

This is [currently expected](#) to be 25 October 2021.

Details about restrictions in the ACT are available on the [ACT Government website](#).

### Gap fee waiving

**Early learning services** in the ACT can waive the gap fee for families who keep their children at home until **25 October 2021**. This includes Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care.

**Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)** services can do so until **1 November 2021**. This is to coincide with when the ACT Government allows all primary school-aged children to return to face-to-face teaching.

Gap fee waiving is a business decision for services. However, if your service is getting business continuity payments from us, you must waive gap fees.

Services that choose to waive gap fees will continue to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

Gap fee waiving helps parents keep their children enrolled without having to pay for a service they are not using.

### Additional allowable absences

Families using early learning services in the ACT can continue to access additional allowable absences until **25 October 2021**. This includes Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care.

For **OSHC services**, this date is **1 November 2021** to coincide with when the ACT Government allows all primary school aged children to return to face-to-face teaching.

This means families will not use up their 42 allowable absences.

### Updates to our website

We are in the process of updating [our website](#) to reflect this and other important information about COVID-19 support in your region. Please check back often.





## 10 October 2021 – targeted update

Gap fee waiving and additional allowable absences are now available to services in NSW until restrictions lift.

Details about restrictions in NSW are available on the [NSW Government website](#).

### Gap fee waiving

Until 18 October, **long day care services** in NSW can waive the gap fee for families who keep their children at home.

For **Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)** services, this date is 25 October to coincide with when all primary school aged children are permitted back at school.

Gap fee waiving is a business decision for services. However, if your service is getting business continuity payments from us, you must waive gap fees.

Services that choose to waive gap fees will continue to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

Gap fee waiving helps parents keep their children enrolled without having to pay for a service they are not using.

### Additional allowable absences

Until 18 October, families using care in NSW can continue to access additional allowable absences.

For **OSHC services**, this date is 25 October to coincide with when all primary school aged children are permitted back at school.

This means families will not use up their 42 allowable absences.

### Updates to our website

We are in the process of updating [our website](#) to reflect this and other important information about COVID-19 support in your region. Please check back often.



## BREAKING: Higher CCS for multiple children and removal of annual cap brought forward

We're making changes to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to help families who currently pay the most and experience the biggest barriers to participation in work.

**From 10 December 2021, we're removing the annual cap for all families who get CCS.**

**From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child in care will get a higher subsidy.**

These changes were announced in the 2021–22 Budget. We're implementing the changes earlier than initially announced to provide more support to families sooner.

### Annual cap

Families earning more than \$190,015 (2021–22 terms) have an annual subsidy cap of \$10,655 per child each financial year.

From 10 December 2021, we're removing the annual cap for all families who get CCS.

### Families with more than one child in care

From 7 March 2022, families with children aged five or under in care will get a higher subsidy for their second child and younger children.

#### Who will be eligible?

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged five or under in child care.

#### Who gets the higher subsidy?

Services Australia will work out which children get the higher subsidy by:

- assessing all children in the family unit
- identifying the standard rate child
- identifying the higher rate children.

The standard rate child will get the standard CCS subsidy. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.



The standard rate child is the eldest child in the family unit aged five or under who is eligible for CCS and attending care.

## How much do higher rate children get?

Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum 95%.

Children eligible for the higher CCS rate will have the increase automatically included in their CCS percentage reported to services.

## What do I need to do?

Child care services don't need to do anything to help families get the higher rate. Services Australia is working with software providers to implement the changes.

It is important that your staff and families are aware of the changes. We'll provide more information and resources to share with staff and families in the weeks and months ahead.

[Details about the changes to CCS are available on our website.](#)



## COVID-19 in Victoria: What hotspot extension in Greater Melbourne and Mitchell means for child care

Child care services in Greater Melbourne and Mitchell Shire can continue to access Australian Government support following the [Commonwealth hotspot extension on 7 October](#) and because they are in lockdown.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

The [current direction from the Victorian Government](#) is that child care is open for:

- vulnerable children
- children with two parents or carers where at least one is an authorised worker, if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made
- children of single parents or carers who work, regardless of whether they are an authorised worker, if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made.

### Business continuity payments

Services already receiving business continuity payments will continue to receive them until the lockdown or the hotspot ends.

[Learn more about business continuity payments.](#)

### Gap fees

Services in Greater Melbourne and Mitchell Shire can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home until the lockdown or the hotspot ends (services in receipt of the business continuity payment must waive gap fees for families whose children are not attending child care).

[Learn more about waiving gap fees.](#)

### Absences

Children enrolled at services in Greater Melbourne and Mitchell Shire can access additional allowable absences.

[Learn more about absences in a COVID-19 hotspot.](#)

### More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.](#)



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

## Moorabool and Greater Shepparton restrictions

Extending the Moorabool and Greater Shepparton lockdown is pending a decision by the Victorian Government.

Extending the Moorabool and Greater Shepparton hotspot is pending a decision by the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer.

## When a lockdown ends

Changes to Australian Government support will apply to child care services if lockdown or the Commonwealth hotspot ends and is not extended.

When this happens:

- Business continuity payments will end. If the lockdown ends during a payment fortnight, services that opted-in will still receive payment for the full fortnight.
- Regular absence provisions apply. That is, families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year.
- Services must resume charging gap fees. If the lockdown ends during a business continuity payment fortnight, services receiving payments must waive gap fees until the end of the payment fortnight.

**To find out what your service is eligible for visit our [early childhood COVID-19 support by region webpage](#).**

## Victoria's roadmap

Each jurisdiction will ease restrictions at different times based on local conditions, in accordance with the [National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response](#).

[Victoria's roadmap can be found on the Victorian Government website.](#)

Services receiving business continuity payments may continue to receive them until no longer in a hotspot and under lockdown or until 30 November, whichever is the earliest.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services will continue to receive business continuity payments, even when a COVID-19 hotspot ends, until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school. The current date for this in Regional Victoria is 26 October 2021 and in Melbourne is 5 November 2021. If OSHC services continue to meet the conditions for the payment, other than being in a COVID-19 hotspot, the last fortnightly payment will be for the period 18 to 31 October in regional Victoria and 1 to 14 November in Melbourne. If the hotspot is extended they may continue receiving payments after this date (up until either the lockdown or hotspot ends or 30 November, whichever is earlier).



## COVID 19 in NSW: Commonwealth-declared hotspot extended

The Australian Government has [extended the Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot declaration](#) for all New South Wales until 11 October 2021.

Services under extended lockdown in NSW may be eligible for Australian Government support.

[Details about lockdowns in NSW are available on the NSW Government website.](#)

**To find out what your service is eligible for visit our [early childhood COVID-19 support by region webpage](#). Here we list regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.**

## Support for services in extended lockdowns

The NSW Government announced current lockdowns would be extended until 11 October in the following areas:

Bathurst, Bourke, Broken Hill, Casino, Central Coast, Cessnock, Dubbo, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Gunnedah, Kiama, Kyogle, Lake Macquarie, Lismore, Lithgow, Maitland, Menindee, Mid Coast suburbs in postcodes 2430 and 2428, Muswellbrook, Narromine, Newcastle, Oberon, Port Stephens, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Snowy Monaro, Sunset Strip, Wilcannia and Wingecarribee.

During extended COVID-19 lockdowns services may be eligible for:

- [business continuity payments](#)
- [gap fee waiving](#), and
- [additional allowable absences](#).

Note: services in Kyogle, Oberon and Snowy Monaro became eligible for the business continuity payment for the period 20 September – 3 October after the pay run was made. Services in these areas will receive payment in the reconciliation process in December 2021.

**To find out what your service is eligible for visit our [early childhood COVID-19 support by region webpage](#).**

## When a lockdown ends

Changes to Australian Government support will apply to child care services as restrictions in their area ease.

When a lockdown ends:



- Business continuity payments will end. If the lockdown ends during a payment fortnight, services that opted-in will still receive payment for the full fortnight.
- Regular absence provisions apply. That is, families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year.
- Services must resume charging gap fees. If the lockdown ends during a business continuity payment fortnight, services receiving payments must waive gap fees until the end of the payment fortnight.

To find out what your service is eligible for visit our [early childhood COVID-19 support by region webpage](#).

## NSW Roadmap to Recovery

Each jurisdiction will ease restrictions at different times based on local conditions, in accordance with the [National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response](#).

[NSW's Roadmap to Recovery can be found on the NSW Government website](#).

Services receiving business continuity payments may continue to receive them until no longer in a hotspot and under lockdown or until 30 November, whichever is the earliest.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services will continue to receive business continuity payments, even when a COVID-19 hotspot ends, until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school or until 30 November 2021 – whichever occurs first.

The current date for this in NSW is 25 October 2021. If OSHC services continue to meet the conditions for the payment, other than being in a COVID-19 hotspot, the last fortnightly payment will be for the period 18 to 31 October.



## Webinar: supporting children's mental health

[Be You](#) is holding a free interactive webinar for early childhood educators to help them understand mental health and wellbeing issues faced by children and young people.

The webinar will take place on Wednesday 13 October 2021 from 3.30 pm to 4.30 pm (AEDT).

The webinar will cover:

- what mental health and wellbeing is, and the importance of promoting mental wellbeing during times of change and uncertainty
- the difference between mental health issues and mental health conditions
- risk and protective factors, and influences that affect mental health
- how to find help
- how to apply these concepts in your community.

Visit the [Be You website](#) to register for the webinar.

## COVID-19 vaccination resources

The [Services Australia website](#) has resources to help your staff and families get proof of their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Information includes:

- guides to getting COVID-19 vaccination evidence
- resources for Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse groups
- videos, flyers and social media content.

## National Safe Work Month

October is National Safe Work Month, a time to commit to building a safe and healthy workplace.

This year's theme is *think safe. work safe. be safe*, which encourages workplaces to plan and implement work health and safety procedures.

[Learn more about National Safe Work Month.](#)

## System maintenance this weekend

Services Australia will undertake scheduled maintenance of its IT systems this weekend.





The Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 8 pm AEDT Saturday 9 October until 6 am AEDT Sunday 10 October.

Providers and services will be unable to enter session reports during this period.



## COVID-19 in Victoria: what Moorabool and Shepparton hotspots mean for child care

Child care services in Moorabool and Greater Shepparton can now access Australian Government support following lockdown announcements and hotspot declarations.

Details about the lockdowns are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

The [current direction from the Victorian Government](#) is that child care is open for:

- vulnerable children
- children with two parents or carers where at least one is an authorised worker, if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made
- children of single parents or carers who work, regardless of whether they are an authorised worker, if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made.

### Gap fees

Services in Moorabool and Greater Shepparton can waive gap fees while in a COVID-19 hotspot for families who keep their children at home. You can waive gap fees from 1 October.

[Learn more about waiving gap fees.](#)

### Absences

Families can get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year.

Additional allowable absences will be available if the hotspot and lockdown is extended for more than 7 days. We'll let you know if this happens.

[Learn more about absences in a COVID-19 hotspot.](#)

### Business continuity payments

Services in extended COVID-19 hotspots may be eligible for business continuity payments.

We'll let you know if you become eligible for business continuity payments.

[Learn more about eligibility for business continuity payments.](#)

### More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.](#)

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



# Eased restrictions in City of Latrobe

Changes to Australian Government support apply to child care services in City of Latrobe following the lifting of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions from 11.59 pm on 5 October.

Details are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

From today (6 October), the following applies:

## Gap fees

Services in Latrobe must resume charging gap fees.

[Learn more about gap fees.](#)

## Absences

Regular absence provisions continue to apply.

Families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year. They can also access additional absences in certain circumstances.

[Learn more about absences.](#)

# What's next: Victoria's roadmap

Each jurisdiction will ease restrictions at different times based on local conditions, in accordance with the [National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response](#).

[Victoria's roadmap can be found on the Victorian Government website.](#)

Services receiving business continuity payments may continue to receive them until no longer in a hotspot and under lockdown or until 30 November, whichever is the earliest.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services will continue to receive business continuity payments, even when a COVID-19 hotspot ends, until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school.

The current date for this in regional Victoria is 26 October 2021. If OSHC services continue to meet the conditions for the payment, other than being in a COVID-19 hotspot, the last fortnightly payment will be for the period 18 to 31 October.



## COVID-19 in the ACT: hotspot is extended

The Australian Government has extended the current [Commonwealth Hotspot for the Australian Capital Territory](#).

During the lockdown, child care services can remain open only for staff, vulnerable children and the children whose parents or carers cannot work from home.

[Read the ACT's Pathway Forward on the ACT Government website.](#)

### Support in a hotspot

Child care services in the ACT are eligible for a range of government support while in lockdown and in a hotspot.

All services in the ACT are eligible for business continuity payments if they meet conditions. Providers who have already accepted the offer will be receiving payments.

Payments will end either when the ACT is no longer in a declared COVID-19 hotspot or on 30 November 2021, whichever is earliest.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services will continue to receive business continuity payments even when a COVID-19 hotspot ends, until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school.

The current date for this in the ACT is 1 November 2021. If OSHC services continue to meet the conditions for business continuity payments, aside from being in a COVID-19 hotspot, the last fortnightly payment will be for the period 18 to 31 October.

[Learn more about business continuity payments.](#)

All services in the ACT can waive gap fees while a COVID-19 hotspot has been declared.

[Learn more about waiving gap fees.](#)

All services in the ACT can access additional allowable absences while a COVID-19 hotspot has been declared.

[Learn more about absences.](#)

[Stay up to date with support for services and families on our COVID-19 webpage.](#)

## Vacation care: business continuity payments

Providers with vacation care-only services will have received an offer for business continuity payments on 24 September.



**Providers have until Thursday 7 October to opt in.** Services have until **Friday 22 October** to submit the sessions of care for the holiday period to receive timely payment.

Services that provide vacation care during the school holidays, including OSHC services, [will receive 40% of the vacation care reference fortnight for the school holiday period.](#)

Payment for the school holiday period will be made in late October / early November.

Providers with OSHC services that provide vacation care were not required to complete another business continuity payment offer where they had already opted-in for those services.



## Business continuity payments for vacation care

Providers with vacation care-only services will have received an offer for business continuity payments on 24 September.

Providers have until **Thursday 7 October** to opt-in. Services have until **Friday 22 October** to submit the sessions of care for the holiday period to receive timely payment.

Services that provide vacation care during the school holidays, including Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services, [will receive 40% of the vacation care reference fortnight for the school holiday period](#).

Payment for the school holiday period will be made in late October/early November.

Providers with OSHC services that provide vacation care were not required to complete another business continuity payment offer where they had already opted-in for those services.

OSHC services will continue to receive business continuity payments even when a COVID-19 hotspot ends until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school.

### New services

New services of all care types will receive an offer later in the year and will receive retrospective payment for the fortnights they were eligible.

We will work with providers for these services to determine an appropriate reference fortnight.

[New services must meet all the eligibility criteria](#).

## Families ending enrolments

A circumstance may arise where a family in a COVID-19 hotspot of more than 7 days, in an area that is also subject to restrictions, chooses to end a child's enrolment.

If this happens, any absences after the child's last physical attendance will be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Services must take some important steps to end enrolments in this situation.

[Learn what to do if a family ends their enrolment during a hotspot](#).

We will soon pay back CCS where debts have been raised after 12 July. You must pass this on to the family if you have raised the debt with them.

We will provide more information about this soon.



## Families in hotspots

Support is available for families who live in a COVID-19 hotspot but have children enrolled at a service outside the hotspot.

Services that are not in a hotspot can waive gap fees for children living in [eligible hotspots](#) while they are absent. These children will also be able to access additional allowable absences during the hotspot period (from 23 June).

Families in these areas will also be able to end an enrolment without attending in person.

## Reminder: Greater Sydney enrolments

On Monday 13 September, Services Australia recorded a one-off \$0 session of care for children enrolled at child care services in Greater Sydney. This is to ensure enrolments remain active during the extended lockdown.

Under Family Assistance Law, enrolments automatically end when a child does not physically attend care for 14 weeks. The \$0 session of care will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021.

The session will show in your system as "COVID-19 System Update". Please check this session has been recorded in your system.



## Business continuity payments: vacation care

Providers with vacation care-only services will have received an offer for business continuity payments on 24 September.

Providers have until **Thursday 7 October** to opt-in. Services have until **Friday 22 October** to submit the sessions of care for the holiday period to receive timely payment.

Services that provide vacation care during the school holidays, including Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services, [will receive 40% of the vacation care reference fortnight for the school holiday period](#).

Payment for the school holiday period will be made late October/early November.

Providers with OSHC services that provide vacation care were not required to complete another business continuity payment offer where they had already opted-in for those services.

OSHC services will continue to receive business continuity payments even when a COVID-19 hotspot ends until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school.

### New services

New services of all care types will receive an offer later in the year and will receive retrospective payment for the fortnights they were eligible.

We will work with providers for these services to determine an appropriate reference fortnight. [New services must meet all the eligibility criteria](#).

## Families ending enrolments

A circumstance may arise where a family in a COVID-19 hotspot of more than 7 days, in an area that is also subject to restrictions, chooses to end a child's enrolment.

If this happens, any absences after the child's last physical attendance will be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Services must take some important steps to end enrolments in this situation.

[Learn what to do if a family ends their enrolment during a hotspot](#).

We will soon pay back CCS where debts have been raised after 12 July. You must pass this on to the family if you have raised the debt with them.

We will provide more information about this soon.





## Families in hotspots

Support is available for families who live in a COVID-19 hotspot but have children enrolled at a service outside the hotspot.

Services that are not in a hotspot can waive gap fees for children living in [eligible hotspots](#) while they are absent. These children will also be able to access additional allowable absences during the hotspot period (from 23 June).

Families in these areas will also be able to end an enrolment without attending in person.



## COVID-19 in Victoria: what City of Latrobe hotspot means for child care

Child care services in the City of Latrobe can access Australian Government support following the Commonwealth [hotspot declaration on 29 September](#).

Details about the lockdown are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

The [current direction from the Victorian Government](#) is that child care is open for:

- vulnerable children
- children with two parents or carers where at least one is an authorised worker, if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made
- children of single parents or carers who work, regardless of whether they are an authorised worker, if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made.

### Gap fees

Services in Latrobe can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home. You can waive gap fees from 29 September.

[Learn more about waiving gap fees.](#)

### Absences

Families can get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year.

Additional allowable absences will be available if the hotspot is extended for more than 7 days. We'll let you know if this happens.

[Learn more about absences in a COVID-19 hotspot.](#)

### Business continuity payments

Services in extended COVID-19 hotspots may be eligible for business continuity payments.

We'll let you know if services in Latrobe become eligible for business continuity payments.

[Learn more about eligibility for business continuity payments.](#)

### More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.](#)

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



# Business continuity payments: vacation care in Victoria

Victorian providers with vacation care-only services will have received an offer for business continuity payments on 24 September.

Providers have until Thursday 7 October to opt-in. Services have until Friday 22 October to submit the sessions of care for the holiday period to receive timely payment.

Services that provide vacation care during the school holidays, including Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services, [will receive 40% of the vacation care reference fortnight for the school holiday period](#).

Payment for the school holiday period will be made in late October/early November.

Providers with OSHC services that provide vacation care were not required to complete another business continuity payment offer where they had already opted-in for those services.

OSHC services will continue to receive business continuity payments, even when a COVID-19 hotspot ends, until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school.

## New services

New services of all care types will receive an offer later in the year and will receive retrospective payment for the fortnights they were eligible.

We will work with providers for these services to determine an appropriate reference fortnight.

New services must meet all the eligibility criteria.

## Victorian families ending enrolments

A circumstance may arise where a family in a COVID-19 hotspot of more than 7 days, in an area that is also subject to restrictions, chooses to end a child's enrolment.

If this happens, any absences after the child's last physical attendance will be eligible for CCS.

Services must take some important steps to end enrolments in this situation.

[Learn what to do if a family ends their enrolment during a hotspot](#).

We will soon pay back CCS where debts have been raised after 12 July. You must pass this on to the family if you have raised the debt with them.

We will provide more information about this soon.



## Victorian families in hotspots

Support is available for families who live in a COVID-19 hotspot but have children enrolled at a service outside the hotspot.

Services that are not in a hotspot can waive gap fees for children living in [eligible hotspots](#) while they are absent. These children will also be able to access additional allowable absences during the hotspot period (from 23 June).

Families in these areas will also be able to end an enrolment without attending in person.



## Guide for providers: adding a service

If you are an existing approved Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provider and want to apply to add a new service, you must comply with the legislative requirements for specified personnel.

### What do CCS approved providers need to do?

You must ensure all specified provider and service personnel in your organisation have:

- registered in Provider Digital Access (PRODA)
- completed required background checks
- been added to the provider or service record through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or their child care software.

### Why do providers need to do this?

You must comply with the law, which requires you to notify us of all the relevant personnel. It will also help to avoid delays and administrative disruptions during the application process.

### Who needs to be included?

Our website has fact sheets that explain who needs to be included from your organisation:

- [Child Care Subsidy Specified Personnel Roles](#)
- [Child Care Subsidy Specified Personnel Quick Reference Guide](#).

### What background checks are needed?

The [CCS Fit and Proper Requirements for Child Care Providers and their Personnel Fact Sheet](#) published on our [Applying for Child Care Subsidy approval](#) webpage specifies the required fit and proper checks for each category of personnel in your organisation.

### Need more information?

If you have questions contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 (10am to 5pm Monday to Friday), or any time [via email](#).

## Inclusion Development Fund subsidy

Child care services that require additional support in addressing barriers to inclusion can apply for the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) subsidy for an Additional Educator under the Inclusion Support Program.



There has not been any change to the way the IDF subsidy is claimed and it is not connected to other COVID-19 support measures, such as gap fee waiving or additional allowable absences.

However, it is important you stay informed about how any change in circumstances might affect your service's eligibility.

[Learn more about claiming IDF payments.](#)

## Children's Week 2021

We are proud supporters of Children's Week, which takes place from 23 to 31 October.

This year's national theme is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 15: "Children have the right to choose their own friends and safely connect with others".

It is at early childhood education and care services that children start their journey of connecting with each other and choosing friends.

Children's Week celebrates the right of children to enjoy childhood. A range of events and activities is scheduled across the country. We encourage you to celebrate Children's Week at your service.

[Find out what's happening in your state or territory.](#)

## CCS Helpdesk closed on Monday

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday on Monday 4 October.

The CCS Helpdesk will return to its normal operating hours on Tuesday, which are 10am to 5pm (AEDT), Monday to Friday.

The CCS Helpdesk can be contacted anytime [via email](#).

Further information and resources for services can also be [found on our website](#).



## COVID-19 in NSW: update on lockdowns and support for child care services

### Lockdown extended in Cowra

Child care services in the Cowra Local Government Area (LGA) can access Australian Government support following the extension of the lockdown because of a COVID-19 outbreak.

On 27 September, the NSW Government announced that the current lockdown would be extended.

### Support available when a lockdown extends seven days

Services in Cowra can now access additional allowable absences. [Learn more about absences in a COVID-19 hotspot.](#)

Services can also waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home. You can waive gap fees from 21 September. [Learn more about waiving gap fees.](#)

Services already receiving business continuity payments will continue to receive them until the lockdown ends.

### Lockdown in Port Macquarie and Muswellbrook

On 28 September the NSW Government announced the Port Macquarie and Muswellbrook LGAs would go into lockdown.

During the lockdown, child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed to close by NSW Health.

Services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) may get business continuity payments, waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences.

**We'll let you know if you become eligible for this support.**

[Further details about COVID-19 support are available on our website.](#)

Details about the Port Macquarie, Muswellbrook and Cowra lockdowns are on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#).

### Easing of restrictions in Yass, Byron, Kempsey and Tweed

Changes to support also apply to child care services in the Yass, Byron, Kempsey and Tweed LGAs following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

At midnight on 27 September, the lockdown was lifted for Yass. At midnight on 28 September, the lockdown was lifted for Byron, Kempsey and Tweed.



Details about the eased restrictions are on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Once a lockdown has ended, the following applies:

## Business continuity payments

Services in Byron, Kempsey and Tweed that opted-in have received their final business continuity payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September.

**Services in those LGAs did not become eligible for business continuity payments during the seven-day lockdown as it was not extended.**

Services in Yass that accepted their business continuity payment offer before 23 September will still receive payment for the fortnight 20 September to 3 October as well.

You don't need to tell us you are coming out of lockdown. Please only tell us if your eligibility in meeting the other conditions of the payment changes.

[Learn about business continuity payment conditions.](#)

## Absences

Regular absence provisions now apply. That is, families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year. [Learn about absences on our website.](#)

## Gap fees

Services must resume charging fees.

## Reminder: Greater Sydney enrolments

On Monday 13 September, Services Australia recorded a one-off \$0 session of care for children enrolled at child care services in Greater Sydney. This is to ensure enrolments remain active during the extended lockdown.

Under Family Assistance Law, enrolments automatically end when a child does not physically attend care for 14 weeks. The \$0 session of care will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021.

The session will show in your system as "COVID-19 System Update". Please check that this session has been recorded in your system.





## COVID-19 in Victoria: what the extended hotspot in Mitchell Shire means for child care

Child care services in Mitchell Shire can access Australian Government support following an extension of the COVID-19 hotspot declaration.

On 26 September, the Victorian Government announced the extension of the current lockdown in Mitchell Shire.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

On 27 September, the Australian Government also extended the Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot for Mitchell Shire.

The [current direction from the Victorian Government](#) is that child care is open for:

- vulnerable children
- children with two parents or carers where at least one is an authorised worker if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made, and
- children of single parents or carers who work, regardless of whether they are an authorised worker, if no alternative supervision arrangements can be made

### Business continuity payments

Services already receiving business continuity payments will continue to receive them until the lockdown ends.

[Learn more about business continuity payments.](#)

### Gap fees

Services in Mitchell Shire can continue to waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home while in a COVID-19 hotspot. Services can also waive gap fees for children whose families live in a hotspot, but attend care outside that hotspot.

Services that receive business continuity payments **must** waive gap fees for all children who are not attending.

[Learn more about waiving gap fees.](#)

[See key dates for waiving gap fees.](#)



## Absences

Families attending services in Mitchell Shire can now access additional allowable absences because the hotspot declaration has extended beyond seven days. Children who live in a hotspot, but attend care outside of that hotspot, will also be eligible for additional allowable absences.

You do not need to do anything to access these absences. The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the Hotspot period as emergency additional absences.

[Learn more about absences in a COVID-19 hotspot.](#)

[See key dates for accessing additional allowable absences.](#)

## What eased restrictions in Greater Geelong and Surf Coast mean for child care

Changes to Australian Government support apply to child care services in Greater Geelong and Surf Coast following the easing of lockdown restrictions from 11.59pm on Sunday 26 September.

Details about the eased restrictions are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

From 27 September the following applies:

### Business continuity payments

Services in Greater Geelong and Surf Coast that opted-in have received their final business continuity payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September.

**Services in Greater Geelong and Surf Coast did not become eligible for business continuity payments during the recent seven-day lockdown as it was not extended.**

[Learn more about eligibility for business continuity payments.](#)

## Absences

Regular absence provisions continue to apply – families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year.

[Learn more about absences.](#)

## Gap fees

Services must resume charging gap fees.

[Learn more about gap fees.](#)



## More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.](#)

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



## COVID-19 in NSW: what lockdown changes in parts of NSW mean for child care services

### Lockdown extended in Hilltops

Child care services in the Hilltops Local Government Area (LGA) can access additional Australian Government support following the extension of the lockdown because of a COVID-19 outbreak.

On 23 September, the NSW Government announced that the current lockdown would be extended.

Details are available on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#).

During the lockdowns child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed to close by NSW Health.

### Support available

Services in Hilltops can now access additional allowable absences. [Learn more about absences in a COVID-19 hotspot](#).

Services can also waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home. You can waive gap fees from 18 September. [Learn more about waiving gap fees](#).

Services already receiving business continuity payments will continue to receive them until the lockdown ends.

## Easing of restrictions in parts of NSW

Changes to support also apply to child care services in the Albury, Lismore, Gilgandra, Brewarrina, Glen Innes and Orange LGAs following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

At midnight on 22 September, the lockdown was lifted for Albury, Lismore, Gilgandra and Brewarrina. From midnight 23 September, the lockdown lifted in Glen Innes and Orange.

Once a lockdown has ended, the following applies:

### Business continuity payments

As the lockdowns in Albury, Lismore, Gilgandra, Brewarrina and Glen Innes were less than seven days, services that accepted their business continuity payment offer before 9 September 2021 will still receive payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September, after which payments will end.

Services in Orange that accepted their business continuity payment offer before 23 September 2021 will still receive payment for the fortnight 20 September to 3 October as well.



You don't need to tell us that you are coming out of lockdown. Please only tell us if your eligibility in meeting the other conditions of the payment changes.

[Learn about business continuity payment conditions.](#)

## Absences

Regular absence provisions now apply. Families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year.

[Learn about absences on our website.](#)

## Gap fees

Services must resume charging fees.

However, if you are receiving business continuity payments you must waive gap fees for the full payment fortnight, even if you came out of lockdown before the end of the payment fortnight.

## Families in hotspots

Support is available for families who live in a hotspot but have children enrolled at a service outside the hotspot.

Services that are not in a hotspot can waive gap fees for children living in [eligible hotspots](#) while they are absent. These children will also be able to access additional allowable absences during the hotspot period. This applies from 23 June. We will provide more information about this support shortly.

## Families ending enrolments

If a family in a hotspot of more than 7 days chooses to end its child's enrolment, any absences after the child's last physical attendance will be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

There are important steps you must take to end enrolments in this situation. [Learn what to do if a family ends their enrolment during a hotspot.](#)

We will soon pay back CCS where debts have been raised after 12 July. You must pass this on to the family if you have raised the debt with them. We will provide more information about this soon.

## More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends.](#)

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



## COVID-19 in Victoria: what eased restrictions in Ballarat mean for child care services

Changes to Australian Government support apply to child care services in Ballarat following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

On 22 September, the lockdown was lifted for Ballarat.

Details are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

From 23 September the following applies:

### Business continuity payments

Services that accepted their business continuity payment offer before 9 September will still receive payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September. Payments will end after this fortnight's payment.

You don't need to tell us that you are coming out of lockdown. Please only tell us if your eligibility in meeting the other conditions of the payment changes.

[Learn about business continuity payment conditions](#).

### Absences

Regular absence provisions now apply – families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year.

[Learn about absences on our website](#).

### Gap fees

Services must resume charging fees.

### More information

[Check this table for regions eligible for support and the dates the support starts and ends](#).

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



## UPDATE: support available in COVID-19 hotspots

Extra support for child care services may be triggered when the [Commonwealth declares a COVID-19 hotspot](#) that lasts more than seven days.

**We will contact you if you become eligible for additional support.**

[You can also check this table to see if you are eligible for COVID-19 support and when support starts and ends.](#)

### Payments for OSHC and vacation care

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services that provide vacation care in an [eligible hotspot](#) over the September/October 2021 school holidays will receive 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue for the fortnight 20 September to 3 October.

We will send business continuity payment offers to services providing vacation care in Victoria, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory by Saturday 25 September.

Eligible services providing vacation care in the school holidays will need to opt in by 7 October to receive payment for the 20 September to 3 October fortnight.

OSHC services in [eligible hotspots](#) will continue to receive business continuity payments even when a hotspot ends until all primary school-aged children are permitted to return to school. The [business continuity payment guidelines](#) will be updated shortly to reflect this.

### Families in hotspots

Support is available for families who live in a hotspot but have children enrolled at a service outside the hotspot.

Services that are not in a hotspot can waive gap fees for children living in [eligible hotspots](#) while they are absent. These children will also be able to access additional allowable absences during the hotspot period. This applies from 23 June. We will provide more information about this support shortly.

Additionally, if a family in a hotspot of more than 7 days chooses to end their child's enrolment, any absences after the child's last physical attendance will be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

There are important steps you must take to end enrolments in this situation. [Learn what to do if a family ends their enrolment during a hotspot.](#)

We will soon pay back CCS where debts have been raised after 12 July. You must pass this on to the family if you have raised the debt with them. We will provide more information about this soon.



## Services receiving business continuity payments

You don't need to tell us if you are coming out of lockdown. We'll contact you about how the end of lockdown affects payments.

If the hotspot ends during the first week of a business continuity payment fortnight, you will still receive the full fortnightly payment.

**Importantly, you must continue to waive gap fees until the end of the fortnightly payment.**

You must let us know if your circumstances change and you no longer meet payment conditions. Send an email to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) and ask for a change of circumstances form.

## More information

We regularly contact providers and services with information about COVID-19 support in their region.

Make sure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Also ask relevant staff at your service to [subscribe to this newsletter](#).

We provide further details about COVID-19 support on our website.

## CCS balancing for 2020-21 has started

Services Australia has started balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2020-21 financial year.

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

## Help families understand balancing

We have a range of resources you can share with families at your service, including a factsheet and poster.

While these resources may help, you're not expected to answer questions families have about balancing.

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

[Go to our website to access the resources and learn more about 2020–21 balancing.](#)





## COVID-19 in Victoria: lockdowns announced in Geelong, Surf Coast and Mitchell Shire

Child care services in parts of Victoria that have gone into lockdown because of a COVID-19 outbreak can access Australian Government support.

On 19 September, the Victorian Government announced Geelong, the Surf Coast and Mitchell Shire would enter a seven-day lockdown.

Details about the lockdown are on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

On 20 September, the Australian Government declared a [Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot](#) for those areas.

During the lockdown, child care is open only to:

- vulnerable children
- children of single parents and carers who are working and
- children with one or more parents or carers who are authorised workers.

### Services receiving business continuity payments

Services already receiving business continuity payments will continue to receive them until the lockdown ends.

Services that opted in by 9 September will receive payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September. If circumstances remain the same, payments will end after this fortnight.

If the lockdown and the hotspot declaration are extended, services will receive payment for the fortnight 20 September to 3 October.

If you have opted in you do not need to tell us if you are going into or coming out of lockdown. Please only tell us if your eligibility in meeting the other conditions of the payment changes.

[See this table for:](#)

- key dates for business continuity payments, gap fee waivers and absences, and
- a full list of regions eligible for support.

### Outside School Hours Care and vacation care

Outside School Hours Care (OSCH) services will continue to receive business continuity payments where school attendance is restricted and where services continue to meet the conditions.



That means OSHC services can continue to receive business continuity payments until all children are permitted to return to school in the affected area.

OSHC services that provide vacation care over the school holidays will receive 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue for this fortnight.

We will provide more information and update the guidelines shortly.

There is no need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you about business continuity payments.

## Other support

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

- support for services
- support for families
- if you have to close
- action you can take.



## COVID-19 in NSW: lockdowns announced in Cowra, Kempsey, Byron and Tweed

Child care services in Cowra, Kempsey, Byron and Tweed Local Government Areas (LGAs) may be eligible for Australian Government support following lockdowns there because of COVID-19 outbreaks.

On 20 September, the NSW Government announced that the Cowra LGA would enter a seven-day lockdown from 5pm.

On 21 September it was announced that Kempsey, Byron and Tweed would also enter a seven-day lockdown from 5pm.

During the lockdowns, child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed to close by NSW Health.

Services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) may get business continuity payments, waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences.

**We'll let you know if you become eligible for this support.**

[Further details about COVID-19 support are available on our website.](#)

### Services receiving business continuity payments

Services that opted in by 9 September will receive payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September. If circumstances remain the same, payments will end after this fortnight.

If the lockdown is extended, services will receive payment for the fortnight 20 September to 3 October.

If you have opted in you do not need to tell us if you are going into or coming out of lockdown. Please only tell us if your eligibility in meeting the other conditions of the payment changes.

[See this table for:](#)

- key dates for business continuity payments, gap fee waivers and absences, and
- a full list of regions eligible for support.

### Outside School Hours Care and vacation care

Outside School Hours Care (OSCH) services will continue to receive business continuity payments where school attendance is restricted and where services continue to meet the conditions.

That means OSHC services can continue to receive business continuity payments until all children are permitted to return to school in the affected area.



OSHC services that provide vacation care over the school holidays will receive 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue for this fortnight.

We will provide more information and update the guidelines shortly.

There is no need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you about business continuity payments.

## Other support

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

- support for services
- support for families
- if you have to close
- action you can take.



## COVID-19 in NSW: what new lockdowns and easing of restrictions mean for child care

### Lockdowns in Albury, Lismore, Glen Innes and Hilltops

On 16 September, the NSW Government announced that the Albury and Lismore Local Government Areas (LGAs) would enter a seven-day lockdown from 6pm.

On 17 September, the NSW Government announced Glen Innes and Hilltops LGAs would also go into lockdown from 6pm.

During the lockdown, child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed to close by NSW Health.

Services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) may get business continuity payments, waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences.

**We'll let you know if you become eligible for this support.**

[Further details about COVID-19 support are available on our website.](#)

Services receiving business continuity payments

Services already receiving business continuity payments will continue to receive them until the lockdown ends.

Services that opted in by 9 September will receive payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September.

[See this table for:](#)

- key dates for business continuity payments, gap fee waivers and absences, and
- a full list of regions eligible for support.

### Outside School Hours Care and vacation care

Outside School Hours Care (OSCH) services will continue to receive business continuity payments where school attendance is restricted and where services continue to meet the conditions.

That means OSCH services can continue to receive business continuity payments until all children are permitted to return to school in the affected area.

OSCH services that provide vacation care over the school holidays will receive 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue for this fortnight. The department will send business continuity payments offers within the next fortnight to services providing vacation care.



**We will provide more information next week and update the guidelines shortly.**

There is no need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you about business continuity payments.

## Easing of restrictions in regional NSW

On 16 September, lockdown was lifted for Bega, Blayney, Bogan, Cabonne, Dungog, Forbes, Muswellbrook, Narrabri, Parkes, Singleton, Snowy Monaro and Upper Hunter LGAs.

Details are available on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#).

**From 16 September, the following applies:**

### Business continuity payments

If you opted in to the business continuity payment by 9 September, you will receive payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September.

You do not need to tell us if you are going into or coming out of lockdown. Please only tell us if your eligibility in meeting the other conditions of the payment changes.

[Learn about business continuity payments on our website.](#)

### Absences

Regular absence provisions now apply – families can access up to 42 days per child, per financial year. [Learn about absences on our website.](#)

### Gap fees

Services must resume charging fees. However, if you are receiving business continuity payments you must waive gap fees for the full payment fortnight, even if you came out of lockdown before the end of the payment fortnight.

## Reminder: Greater Sydney enrolments

On Monday 13 September, Services Australia recorded a one-off \$0 session of care for children enrolled at child care services in Greater Sydney.

This is to ensure enrolments remain active during the extended lockdown.

Under Family Assistance Law, enrolments automatically end when a child does not physically attend care for 14 weeks. The \$0 session of care will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021. The session will show in your system as “COVID-19 System Update”.

### What you need to do

Please confirm the \$0 session is now there if your service is in Greater Sydney.



If it's not, you will need to add it manually.

[See instructions on how to add the \\$0 session on our website.](#)

When you vary session reports this week, you must re-enter the \$0 session of care unless you are recording actual attendances for a child.

If you vary a session report and do not re-enter the \$0 session of care where a child did not attend, their enrolment will cease 14 weeks after their last attendance.

Services in Greater Sydney should [read the advice on our website for detailed information about the \\$0 session of care.](#)



## COVID-19 in Victoria: support child care services in Ballarat can access

Child care services in Ballarat can access Australian Government support following the lockdown of the city because of a COVID-19 outbreak.

On 15 September, the Victorian Government announced Ballarat would enter a seven-day lockdown.

Details about the lockdown are on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Also on 15 September, the Australian Government declared a [Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot for Ballarat](#).

During the lockdown, child care is open only to:

- vulnerable children
- children of single parents and carers who are working, and
- children with one or more parents or carers who are authorised workers.

### Business continuity payments

**If you opted in to the business continuity payment by 9 September, you will receive payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September.**

You do not need to tell us if you are going into or coming out of lockdown. Please only tell us if your eligibility in meeting the other conditions of the payment changes.

Where a service comes out of lockdown in the first week of the business continuity payment fortnightly payment period, they will still receive the full fortnightly payment.

### Outside School Hours Care and vacation care

Outside School Hours Care (OSCH) services will continue to receive the business continuity payments where school attendance is restricted and where services continue to meet the conditions.

That means OSHC services can continue to receive business continuity payments until all primary school children are permitted to return to school in the affected area.

OSHC services that provide vacation care over the school holidays will receive 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue for this fortnight. The department will send business continuity payments offers within the next fortnight to services providing vacation care.

We will provide more information next week and update the guidelines shortly.

There is no need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you about business continuity payments.





## Gap fees

Services in areas under lockdown and in a Commonwealth declared COVID-19 hotspot can waive gap fees.

Services receiving the business continuity payments must waive gap fees for the full payment fortnight. This includes where services come out of lockdown in the first week of the business continuity payment fortnight payment period.

## Absences

Families can get Child Care Subsidy when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year. They can also get additional absences in certain circumstances.

Additional allowable absences will be available if the hotspot declaration is extended to more than 7 days. Eligibility will be backdated to day one of the hotspot declaration.

## Easing of restrictions in Shepparton

Changes to Australian Government support apply to early childhood services following the easing of lockdown restrictions in Shepparton from 16 September.

Details about changes to restrictions are on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

**From 16 September, the following applies:**

### Business continuity payments

Eligible services will receive the business continuity payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September, if they opted-in by 9 September. If circumstances remain the same, payments will end after this fortnight payment.

[Learn about business continuity payments on our website.](#)

### Absences

Additional allowable absences will no longer be available from 15 September. Services must resume submitting absences as usual.

[Learn about absences on our website.](#)

### Gap fees

Services receiving the business continuity payments are required to waive gap fees for the full duration of the payment fortnight.

### Other support

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



- support for services
- support for families
- if you have to close
- action you can take



## Outside School Hours Care and vacation care

Outside School Hours Care services that provide vacation care over the school holidays will receive 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue for this fortnight.

We will send business continuity payments offers within the next fortnight to services providing vacation care.

Of note, Outside School Hours Care services will continue to receive business continuity payments where school attendance is restricted and where services continue to meet the conditions.

**We will provide more information next week and update the guidelines shortly.**

There is no need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you about business continuity payments.



## COVID-19 in ACT: support for child care services in extended lockdown

Child care services in extended lockdown in the Australian Capital Territory are eligible for a range of support from the Australian Government.

The ACT Government announced on 14 September the current lockdown will be extended until 15 October.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Also, on 15 September the Australian Government [extended the current Commonwealth Hotspot for the ACT](#).

During the lockdown, child care services can remain open only for staff, vulnerable children and the children whose parents or carers cannot work from home.

### Support during lockdown

Child care services in the ACT are eligible for a range of government support during the COVID-19 lockdown.

All services in the ACT are eligible for business continuity payments if they meet conditions. Providers who have already accepted the offer will be receiving payments.

If you haven't accepted the offer, you need to do so by 23 September to receive the next fortnightly payment. This payment will be for the fortnight 20 September to 3 October.

[Learn more about business continuity payments.](#)

All services in the ACT can waive gap fees.

[Learn more about waiving gap fees.](#)

All services in the ACT can access additional allowable absences.

[Learn more about absences.](#)

[Stay up to date with support for services and families on our COVID-19 webpage.](#)



## Greater Sydney enrolments: \$0 session of care

On Monday 13 September, Services Australia recorded a one-off \$0 session of care for children enrolled at child care services in Greater Sydney. This is to ensure enrolments remain active during the extended lockdown.

Under Family Assistance Law, enrolments automatically end when a child does not physically attend care for 14 weeks. The \$0 session of care will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021.

The session will show in your system as “COVID-19 System Update”.

### What you need to do

**Please confirm the \$0 session is now there if your service is in Greater Sydney.**

If it's not, you will need to add it manually. [See instructions on how to add the \\$0 session on our website.](#)

**When you vary session reports this week, you must re-enter the \$0 session of care unless you are recording actual attendances for a child.**

If you vary a session report and do not re-enter the \$0 session of care where a child did not attend, their enrolment will cease 14 weeks after their last attendance.

Services in Greater Sydney should [read the advice on our website for detailed information about the \\$0 session of care.](#)



## COVID-19 update

As the situation continues to change, it's important to keep up to date with how COVID-19 restrictions affect child care in your area.

We have information about support measures that are available to services in Commonwealth-declared hotspots, including access to business continuity payments, additional allowable absences, and gap fee waiving.

[See this table for eligible regions.](#)

### Providers and services in Greater Sydney

On Monday 13 September, Services Australia recorded a one-off \$0 session of care for children enrolled at child care services in Greater Sydney. This is to ensure enrolments remain active during the extended lockdown.

Under Family Assistance Law, enrolments automatically end when a child does not physically attend care for 14 weeks – the \$0 session of care will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021.

The session will show in your system as "COVID-19 System Update".

**Please confirm the \$0 session is now there if your service is in Greater Sydney.** If it's not, you will need to add it manually. [See instructions on how to add the \\$0 session on our website.](#)

**When you vary session reports this week, you must re-enter the \$0 session of care unless you are recording actual attendances for a child.**

If you vary a session report and do not re-enter the \$0 session of care where a child did not attend, their enrolment will cease 14 weeks after their last attendance.

Services in Greater Sydney should [read the advice on our website for detailed information about the \\$0 session of care.](#)

### Other support

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

- support for services
- support for families
- if you have to close
- action you can take.



# Approved Learning Frameworks

ACECQA is asking for your thoughts on the Approved Learning Frameworks Update project as part of the National Quality Framework.

To contribute, you can either [make a written submission or complete a survey](#) about the discussion paper by this Friday 17 September.

Your feedback on stage two of the project will inform recommendations for updates to two Approved Learning Frameworks.

- [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#) and
- [My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia](#).

The Approved Learning Frameworks Update is a partnership between Macquarie University, Queensland University of Technology and Edith Cowan University. It has been undertaken by ACECQA on behalf of the government.

To receive regular updates on the project, visit the website and [register your interest](#).

## CCS Helpdesk

The CCS Helpdesk has been impacted by COVID lockdowns which has affected our capacity to take calls over the past few weeks.

From this week, opening hours are 10am to 5pm (AEST time), Monday to Friday.

Please [check our website for information](#) before contacting us.

You can also reach us anytime [via email](#).

If your question relates to business continuity payments, please email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au).

Thank you for your patience during this time.



## COVID-19 in Victoria: what eased lockdown restrictions mean for child care services

Changes to Australian Government support apply to early childhood services following the easing of lockdown restrictions in most of regional Victoria from 11.59 pm on 9 September.

Details about changes to restrictions are on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

**From 10 September, the following changes applied to services in regional Victoria, excluding Greater Shepparton.**

### Business continuity payments

Eligible services will receive the business continuity payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September, if they opted-in by 9 September. Payments will end after this fortnight's payment.

You do not need to notify us if your service is no longer in lockdown.

[Learn about business continuity payments on our website.](#)

### Absences

**Additional allowable absences will no longer be available from 10 September. Services must resume submitting absences as usual.**

Families can get Child Care Subsidy when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year. They can also get additional absences in certain circumstances.

[Learn about absences on our website.](#)

### Gap fees

More information on gap fees will be provided soon.

## Support for services in lockdown

Services in Greater Shepparton and Metropolitan Melbourne will continue to get business continuity payments, where they've opted-in, until advised further.

They can also continue to waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences while the lockdown remains in place.

[See full list of regions currently eligible for support.](#)

[Further details about COVID-19 support are available on our website.](#)





## COVID-19 in NSW: what eased lockdown restrictions mean for child care services

Changes to Australian Government support apply to early childhood services following the easing of lockdown restrictions in parts of New South Wales from 11 September.

Details about changes to restrictions are on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#).

**From 11 September, the following changes applied to services in NSW where stay-at-home orders no longer apply.**

[We list these regions on our website](#).

### Business continuity payments

Eligible services will receive the business continuity payment for the fortnight 6 to 19 September, if they opted-in by 9 September. Payments will end after this fortnight's payment.

You do not need to notify us if your service is no longer in lockdown.

[Learn about business continuity payments on our website](#).

### Absences

**Additional allowable absences will no longer be available from 11 September. Services must resume submitting absences as usual.**

Families can get Child Care Subsidy when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year. They can also get additional absences in certain circumstances.

[Learn about absences on our website](#).

### Gap fees

More information on gap fees will be provided soon.

## Support for services in lockdown, including Yass

Services in parts of NSW that remain under stay-at-home orders will continue to get business continuity payments, where they've opted-in, until advised further.

They can also continue to waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences while the lockdown remains in place.



**Services in the Yass Valley will receive all the above support following the NSW Government announcement the Local Government Area will enter a two-week lockdown from today (14 September).**

[See full list of regions eligible for support.](#)

[Further details about COVID-19 support are available on our website.](#)



## UPDATED ADVICE: 14-week period and child care enrolments in Greater Sydney

**We have updated our advice about how to handle child care enrolments in regard to the 14-week period.**

**Providers and services in Greater Sydney should read the below advice carefully.**

Under Family Assistance Law, enrolments automatically end when a child does not physically attend care for 14 weeks.

**This 14-week period may be up soon for families in Greater Sydney.**

To ensure enrolments remain active during the extended lockdown, on Monday 13 September 2021, Services Australia will record a one-off \$0 session of care for enrolled children at child care services in Greater Sydney.

This will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021.

This means that where children have not attended care since 7 June 2021, their enrolments will not cease.

The session will show in your system as “COVID-19 System Update”. It has no impact on a family’s Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

**When you vary a session report for the week starting Monday 13 September (noting many of you will), you must re-enter the \$0 session of care in that report unless you are recording actual attendances for that child in that week.**

**If you vary the session report and do not replace the \$0 session of care where a child did not attend, their enrolment will cease 14 weeks after their last attendance.**

For children who are being unenrolled from care, further advice will be provided to services shortly.

### What you need to do

Services Australia will apply the \$0 session of care at the child’s usual service from 12:01am to 12:30am on 13 September 2021.

If your child care service is in Greater Sydney, please confirm the \$0 session is there after this time. If not, please follow the instructions below to add it.

Make sure you don’t vary the session report for week commencing 13 September unless you need to record absences or attendances in this week.



If you need to submit sessions in the same week as the \$0 session has been entered by Services Australia, please ensure your session reports include the \$0 session (for 13 September 12:01am to 12:30am).

## How to add the \$0 session of care

- You will need to re-enter the \$0 session of care in the session report for 13 September 2021 and enter the time as 12:01am to 12:30am.
- In the session description you need to state “COVID-19 service update”, to distinguish this from the original Services Australia entry.
- You can only do this if Services Australia has submitted an initial session report with the 13 September 2021 \$0 session of care for the enrolment. This activity will be monitored through compliance checks.

## Which services will get the \$0 sessions

Services in the following Greater Sydney Local Government Areas will have the \$0 session applied on 13 September 2021 in the circumstances outlined above.

Bayside, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Burwood, Camden, Campbelltown, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, Central Coast, Parramatta, Shellharbour, City of Sydney, Cumberland, Fairfield, Georges River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Penrith, Randwick, Ryde, Strathfield, Sutherland, The Hills Shire, Waverley, Willoughby, Wollondilly, Wollongong, and Woollahra.



10 September 2021 – targeted update

## UPDATE: child care support and changing lockdown restrictions in NSW and Victoria

COVID-19 lockdown restrictions have eased in most of regional Victoria and will do so in parts of New South Wales.

**We are monitoring the changes and will let you know next week how they impact Australian Government support for early childhood services.**

There is no need to call the CCS Helpdesk or request a change of circumstance form for business continuity payments because you are no longer in a COVID hotspot – the department is monitoring lockdowns.

We will be in touch soon with more information.

Our email newsletter and [COVID-19 webpage](#) are the best ways to stay up to date.

If you don't already, [subscribe to this newsletter](#) and check that your contact details are correct in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to children and families at this challenging time.



## DEADLINE TODAY: Accept business continuity payment offer for next fortnightly payment

Providers in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory who have not accepted their business continuity payment offer must do so by 11.59 pm today to receive payment in the fortnight starting 20 September.

We will not make retrospective payments to providers who miss the deadline.

[Go to our website for how to accept the offer or what to do if you can't find it.](#)

### Timing of payments

If you have already accepted the business continuity payment offer, you don't need to do anything.

We're making payments this week to providers who accepted their offer by Friday 3 September.

**You might not see the payment in your account until early next week.**

There is no need to contact us if you don't see the payment this week.

[Keep an eye on our website for updates.](#)

### Child care enrolments in Greater Sydney

Under Family Assistance Law, enrolments automatically end when a child does not physically attend care for 14 weeks.

**This 14-week period may be up soon for families in Greater Sydney.**

To ensure enrolments remain active during the extended lockdown, on Monday 13 September 2021, Services Australia will record a one-off \$0 session of care for enrolled children at child care services in Greater Sydney.

This will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021.

This means that where children have not attended care since 7 June, their enrolments will not cease.

The session will show in your system as "COVID-19 system update". It has no impact on a family's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

**You must not vary or withdraw the \$0 session of care unless it conflicts with an actual attendance.**

If you vary or withdraw the \$0 session of care where a child did not attend, their enrolment will cease 14 weeks after their last attendance.

[Learn more about enrolments in Greater Sydney.](#)



## National Workforce Census

Thank you to the providers and services who took part in the National Workforce Census.

We achieved a 99% completion rate, which is the highest since the compulsory census began.

The response rate for Family Day Care and In Home Care services was 100%. This was followed closely by Outside School Hours Care, vacation care and Centre Based Day Care services at 98%.

We are analysing census responses and we will let you know when results are released.

## R U Ok Day

Today is R U Ok Day, with the theme "Are they really ok? Ask them today".

R U OK Day inspires and empowers everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and to start a conversation with those in their world who may be struggling.

[Get involved and access resources on the website.](#)

## National Child Protection Week

This week is National Child Protection Week. This year's theme is "Every child, in every community, needs a fair go".

[Learn more and get involved here.](#)

## CCS Helpdesk

The CCS Helpdesk is receiving a high volume of enquiries. Please [check our website for information](#) before contacting us.


If you have questions, the best way to get in touch is [via email](#). If your question relates to business continuity payments, please email [CECIViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:CECIViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au).



## Did you get a text message from DESE?

Today we're sending SMS notifications to child care providers eligible for business continuity payments but who have not yet opted in. We're also calling providers.

The text message looks like this:



DESE ALERT: A business continuity payment form has been sent to your registered email. Opt-in by 9 Sept. Visit [www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare](http://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare) for details. Do not reply by SMS.

If you receive an SMS you must accept your offer to get business continuity payments.

You must accept it by 11.59 pm Thursday 9 September to receive payment in the fortnight starting 20 September 2021.

[Go to our website for instructions on how to accept or what to do if you can't find the offer.](#)





## Providers in ACT: accept business continuity payment by Thursday to get fortnightly payment

If you haven't already, you must accept your business continuity payment by 11.59pm Thursday 9 September to receive payment in the fortnight starting 20 September 2021.

We emailed providers in the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales business continuity payment offers last week.

The first payment will be made this week to providers who accepted the offer by Friday 3 September. Note, however, that payment may not be received in providers' accounts until early next week.

We will not make retrospective payments to providers who missed the first deadline.

### Read the guidelines

You must agree to conditions for each service that you run to receive business continuity payments.

[These guidelines explain the conditions in detail.](#)

### How to accept the offer

If you have already accepted the offer and your circumstances have not changed, you do not need to do anything further to receive the second payment.

If you did not accept the initial offer but now wish to receive payments, simply accept the offer by submitting the DocuSign form.

### If you haven't received an offer

The email was sent from [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) to the provider-level email address registered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

If you are a provider in the ACT and can't see the offer, please check your junk mail.

If you still can't see the offer, send an email to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) and check that your contact details are correct in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

### Change of circumstances

We remind providers receiving business continuity payments that if circumstances change at any of your services, you must email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) as soon as possible.

We will issue you a new DocuSign form to complete.



## More information

Thank you to those who have emailed us and updated their details in the Child Care Subsidy System. We will respond to your email as soon as possible.

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



## Providers in Victoria: accept business continuity payment by Thursday to get next payment

If you haven't already, you must accept your business continuity payment by 11.59pm Thursday 9 September to receive payment in the fortnight starting 20 September 2021.

We emailed providers in Victoria, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory business continuity payment offers last week.

The first payment will be made this week to providers who accepted the offer by Friday 3 September. Note, however, that payment may not be received in providers' accounts until early next week.

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## Child care enrolments in Greater Sydney

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This will reset the start of the 14-week period to begin from 13 September 2021.

This means that where children have not attended care since 7 June, their enrolments will not cease.

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For children who are being unenrolled from care, further advice will be provided to services shortly.

## What you need to do

Services Australia will apply the \$0 session of care at the child’s usual service from 12:01am to 12:30am on 13 September 2021.

Please confirm the \$0 session is there and rectify if not.

If you submit sessions in the same week as the \$0 session has been entered by Services Australia, please ensure your session reports include the \$0 session.

**Make sure you don’t remove the session.** If you accidentally do, this is how to add it back:

- You will need to re-enter the \$0 session of care in the session report for 13 September 2021 and enter the time as 12:01am to 12:30am. In the session description you need to state “COVID-19 service update”, to distinguish this from the original Services Australia entry.
- You can only do this if Services Australia has submitted an initial session report with the 13 September 2021 \$0 session of care for the enrolment. This activity will be monitored through compliance checks.



## Which services will get the \$0 sessions

Services in the following Greater Sydney Local Government Areas will have the \$0 session applied on 13 September 2021 in the circumstances outlined above.

Bayside, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Burwood, Camden, Campbelltown, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, Central Coast, Parramatta, Shellharbour, City of Sydney, Cumberland, Fairfield, Georges River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Penrith, Randwick, Ryde, Strathfield, Sutherland, The Hills Shire, Waverley, Willoughby, Wollondilly, Wollongong, and Woollahra.



## URGENT: Deadline is today for NSW providers to accept business continuity payment

We emailed providers in New South Wales, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory business continuity payment offers on Wednesday 1 September.

**You must accept this offer through DocuSign by 11.59 pm tonight (Friday 3 September) for payments to be made in the week starting Monday 6 September.**

If you miss this deadline, the next fortnightly payment will be made in the week starting 20 September 2021. No retrospective payments will be made for late submission.

### Read the guidelines

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If circumstances change at any of your services, you must email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) as soon as possible. We will issue you a new DocuSign form to complete.

If you have any questions, [read the information on our website](#) before contacting us.

### How to accept the offer

Most providers can simply accept the offer by submitting the DocuSign form.

**Large providers must also fill out an additional spreadsheet** that captures which of their services they want to opt-in for payments, and confirm each service meets all conditions.

Large providers must return the spreadsheet to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au)

Your offer will indicate if you need to undertake this additional step.

### If you haven't received an offer

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## More information

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- You can only do this if Services Australia has submitted an initial session report with the 13 September 2021 \$0 session of care for the enrolment. This activity will be monitored through compliance checks.



## Which services will get the \$0 sessions

The services in the following Greater Sydney Local Government Areas will have the \$0 session applied on 13 September 2021 in the circumstances outlined above.

Bayside, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Burwood, Camden, Campbelltown, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, Central Coast, Parramatta, Shellharbour, City of Sydney, Cumberland, Fairfield, Georges River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Penrith, Randwick, Ryde, Strathfield, Sutherland, The Hills Shire, Waverley, Willoughby, Wollondilly, Wollongong, and Woollahra.



## URGENT: Deadline today for Victorian providers to accept business continuity payment

We emailed providers in Victoria, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory business continuity payment offers on Wednesday 1 September.

**You must accept this offer through DocuSign by 11.59 pm tonight (Friday 3 September) for payments to be made in the week starting Monday 6 September.**

If you miss this deadline, the next fortnightly payment will be made in the week starting 20 September 2021. No retrospective payments will be made for late submission.

### Read the guidelines

You must agree to conditions for each service that you run to receive business continuity payments.

[These guidelines explain the conditions in detail.](#)

If circumstances change at any of your services, you must email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) as soon as possible. We will issue you a new DocuSign form to complete.

If you have any questions, [read the information on our website](#) before contacting us.

### How to accept the offer

Most providers can simply accept the offer by submitting the DocuSign form.

**Large providers must also fill out an additional spreadsheet** that captures which of their services they want to opt-in for payments, and confirm each service meets all conditions.

Large providers must return the spreadsheet to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au)

Your offer will indicate if you need to undertake this additional step.

### If you haven't received an offer

The email was sent from [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) to the provider-level email address registered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

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## More information

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[Keep an eye on our COVID-19 webpage for more information.](#)

## Lockdown extended

The Victorian Government announced on 1 September the current lockdown will be extended.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Also, on 2 September the Australian Government [extended the current Commonwealth Hotspot for Victoria](#).

Childcare and early education centres will open for vulnerable children and the children of authorised workers only.

## Support during lockdown

Child care services in Victoria are eligible for a range of government support during the COVID-19 lockdown.

**All services in Victoria are eligible for business continuity payments** if they meet conditions. Providers must accept the offer by today (Friday), as outlined above to receive the first fortnightly payment.

[Go to our website for details about business continuity payments.](#)

**All services in Victoria can waive gap fees.**

[Go to our website for details about waiving gap fees.](#)

**All services in Victoria can access additional allowable absences.**

[Go to our website for details about absences.](#)

[Go to our website for more information about support for services and families.](#)



## URGENT: Deadline is today for ACT providers to accept business continuity payment

We emailed providers in Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria business continuity payment offers on Wednesday 1 September.

**You must accept this offer through DocuSign by 11.59 pm tonight (Friday 3 September) for payments to be made in the week starting Monday 6 September.**

If you miss this deadline, the next fortnightly payment will be made in the week starting 20 September 2021. No retrospective payments will be made for late submission.

### Read the guidelines

You must agree to conditions for each service that you run to receive business continuity payments.

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If circumstances change at any of your services, you must email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) as soon as possible. We will issue you a new DocuSign form to complete.

If you have any questions, [read the information on our website](#) before contacting us.

### How to accept the offer

Most providers can simply accept the offer by submitting the DocuSign form.

**Large providers must also fill out an additional spreadsheet** that captures which of their services they want to opt-in for payments, and confirm each service meets all conditions.

Large providers must return the spreadsheet to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au)

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## More information

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## ACTION REQUIRED: Victorian providers must accept business continuity payment by tomorrow (Friday)

Yesterday, we emailed providers in Victoria, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory business continuity payment offers.

**You must accept this offer through DocuSign by 11.59 pm tomorrow (Friday 3 September) for payments to be made in the week starting Monday 6 September.**

If you miss the 3 September cut-off date, the next fortnightly payment will be made in the week starting 20 September 2021. No retrospective payments will be made for late submission.

### Guidelines now available

You must agree to conditions for each service that you run to receive business continuity payments.

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The email was sent from [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) to the provider-level email address registered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

If you are a provider in NSW and can't see the offer, please check your junk mail.

If you still can't see the offer, send an email to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) and check that your contact details are correct in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.



## More information

If you have questions, email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au).

[Keep an eye on our COVID-19 webpage for more information.](#)

## Support during lockdown

Child care services in NSW are eligible for a range of government support during the COVID-19 lockdown.

All services in NSW are eligible for **business continuity payments** if they meet conditions. Providers must accept the offer by tomorrow (Friday), as outlined above to receive the first fortnightly payment.

[Go to our website for details about business continuity payments.](#)

All services in NSW can waive gap fees.

[Go to our website for details about waiving gap fees.](#)

All services in NSW can access additional allowable absences.

[Go to our website for details about absences.](#)

[Go to our website for more information about support for services and families.](#)



## ACTION REQUIRED: ACT providers must accept business continuity payment by tomorrow (Friday)

Yesterday, we emailed providers in Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria business continuity payment offers.

**You must accept this offer through DocuSign by 11.59 pm tomorrow (Friday 3 September) for payments to be made in the week starting Monday 6 September.**

If you miss the 3 September cut-off date, the next fortnightly payment will be made in the week starting 20 September 2021. No retrospective payments will be made for late submission.

### Guidelines now available

You must agree to conditions for each service that you run to receive business continuity payments.

[These guidelines explain the conditions in detail.](#)

If circumstances change at any of your services, you must email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) as soon as possible. We will issue you a new DocuSign form to complete.

### How to accept the offer

Most providers can simply accept the offer by submitting the DocuSign form.

**Large providers must also fill out an additional spreadsheet** that captures which of their services they want to opt-in for payments, and confirm each service meets all conditions.

Large providers must return the spreadsheet to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au).

Your offer will indicate if you need to undertake this additional step.

### If you haven't received an offer

The email was sent from [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) to the provider-level email address registered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

If you are a provider in the ACT and can't see the offer, please check your junk mail.

If you still can't see the offer, send an email to [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au) and check that your contact details are correct in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

### More information

If you have questions, email [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au).



[Keep an eye on our COVID-19 webpage for more information.](#)

## Lockdown extended

The ACT Government announced on 31 August the current lockdown will be extended until 17 September.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Also, on 1 September the Australian Government [extended the current Commonwealth Hotspot](#) for the ACT.

During the lockdown child care services can remain open only for staff, vulnerable children and the children whose parents or carers cannot work from home.

## Support during lockdown

Child care services in the ACT are eligible for a range of government support during the COVID-19 lockdown.

All services in the ACT are eligible for **business continuity payments** if they meet conditions. Providers must accept the offer by tomorrow (Friday), as outlined above to receive the first fortnightly payment.

[Go to our website for details about business continuity payments.](#)

All services in the ACT can **waive gap fees**.

[Go to our website for details about waiving gap fees.](#)

All services in the ACT can access **additional allowable absences**.

[Go to our website for details about absences.](#)

[Go to our website for more information about support for services and families.](#)



## Business continuity payments offered to child care services in extended COVID-19 lockdowns

Child care services in New South Wales, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory can get COVID-19 business continuity payments if they meet conditions.

Business continuity payments will be made to services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) if:

- the Commonwealth hotspot runs for more than 7 days and the state or territory government has limited who can access child care, or
- the Commonwealth hotspot extends beyond 28 days.

Providers in these jurisdictions will be sent offers today (Wednesday) to receive the payments.

Payments are subject to providers meeting conditions outlined to them and submitting their acceptances by **this Friday**.

### Other Australian Government support

As well as these payments, we are providing support to COVID-19 affected services via gap fee waiving, additional allowable absences, and other measures.

[Details about business continuity payments, and other support measures are available on our website.](#)

## Important: update your information

Please ensure that all contact details are up-to-date, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System. Do this via the [Provider Entry Portal](#) or your third-party software.

It's important that we have correct information to contact you directly for a range of reasons, including informing you when extra support is available.

## Communication survey: last chance

Today is the last day to tell us how you like to hear from us about early childhood and child care policy and issues.

It's never been more important to us to understand how we should inform you.

Complete this [short 10-minute survey](#) to help us improve your access to relevant and timely information.



The survey will not collect personal information and all responses will remain anonymous.

## Indigenous Literacy Day

Today is Indigenous Literacy Day. This year's theme is "Celebrating Stories and Language".

Storytelling provides a window into the rich, diverse, and multilingual world of First Nations peoples.

[Learn more with short, inspiring video stories by First Nations storytellers from across the country.](#)

## Adult Learners Week 2021

Adult Learners Week begins today with online events and activities held to promote the benefits of learning at work, in the home, and in the community.

[Learn how you can get involved to promote life-long learning.](#)

## National Child Protection Week

National Child Protection Week is next week, with the theme "Every child, in every community, needs a fair go".

To get involved and to access resources, visit <https://www.napcan.org.au/get-involved-2021/>

## Early Childhood Educators' Day

Today is Early Childhood Educators' Day. This is an opportunity to celebrate the contribution made by educators in early learning services to the wellbeing and healthy development of children.

[Read more about Early Childhood Educators' Day.](#)



## Business continuity payments: offer tomorrow

**Tomorrow (Wednesday 1 September), we will send offers of business continuity payments to providers affected by COVID-19 lockdowns.**

You must accept this offer by 11.59pm this Friday 3 September for payments to be made in the week starting Monday 6 September.

### What are business continuity payments?

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) can get fortnightly business continuity payments if:

- the Commonwealth hotspot runs for more than 7 days and the state or territory government has limited who can access child care, or
- the Commonwealth hotspot extends beyond 28 days.

More information on [what each care type receives can be found on our website.](#)

### Who is eligible?

Currently, services in Victoria, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory are eligible for business continuity payments.

### What are the conditions?

For providers with multiple services, you will be required to confirm that each of the services to receive payments meets all conditions.

[Conditions are outlined in this document.](#)

### How will the offers be made?

On Wednesday 1 September, eligible providers will receive an email from this address: [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au)

The email will be sent to the **provider-level email address** registered in the Child Care Subsidy System.

It will contain a DocuSign document that sets out instructions for opting in to receive payments.

Please read the document thoroughly.

You must opt-in for each service you run. You will also be asked for other information.

**You must sign and return this to us by this Friday. You do that by pressing “submit” at the end of the form.**



If you miss the 3 September cut-off date, the next fortnightly payment will be made in the week starting 20 September 2021.

Please note, no retrospective payments will be made for late submission.

Timely notification of your initial acceptance or decline of the offer, and any subsequent changes to your circumstances is critical.

## Extra step for large providers

Large providers will be asked to fill-out an additional spreadsheet that captures which of their services they want to opt-in for payments, and confirm each service meets all conditions.

These providers will need to return this spreadsheet to the following address: [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au)

## How and when will payments be made?

Payments will be backdated to 23 August and will continue until:

- you choose to opt out
- if circumstances change, such that your services no longer meet payment conditions
- the Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot declaration ends, or
- the Commonwealth ceases payments.

## Important: update your information

To ensure you receive an offer for a business continuity payment, please update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System.

Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

## More information

We will provide you with updates on payments and anything else you need to know.

If you have questions email: [ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECECViabilitySupportPackage@dese.gov.au)

## Other Australian Government support

As well as these payments, we are providing support to COVID-19 affected services via gap fee waiving, additional allowable absences, and other measures.

[Read more.](#)





## COVID-19 in NSW: child care services in regions to get business continuity payments

Child care services in regional New South Wales will be eligible for business continuity payments following the extension of the lockdown.

The NSW Government announced on 26 August the lockdown would be extended.

On 28 August, the Australian Government extended the Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot to 10 September for all of NSW. It also issued a hotspot declaration for the Jervis Bay Territory, effective until 10 September.

Details about the lockdown are on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#).

During the lockdown, child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed to close by NSW Health.

However, parents and carers across NSW are strongly encouraged to keep their children at home unless they need to be at a service.

Keep your eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 ECEC services webpage](#) in the event advice about child care changes.

### Business continuity payments

Services in NSW will become eligible to receive business continuity payments from 28 August, with payments backdated to 23 August.

Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care services will get fortnightly payments of 25% of their pre-lockdown revenue, calculated up to the hourly cap.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and vacation care services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue, calculated up to the hourly cap.

Payments will be based on a service's revenue in a specified fortnight before the lockdown.

Business continuity payments are contingent on services:

- having reasonable expectations attendance will drop below 50%
- not accessing other Commonwealth Government-funded business supports
- waiving gap fees for all families whose children are not attending
- maintaining staffing levels, and
- agreeing to a fee freeze for the duration of business continuity payments.

[See regions eligible for business continuity payments.](#)



[Read more about conditions for getting business continuity payments.](#)

## We'll contact you

You do not need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you soon with details on how to apply for business continuity payments.

## Update your details

To ensure you receive an offer for a business continuity payment, please update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

## Gap fees

All services in NSW can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home.

Go to our website for details about [waiving gap fees](#).

[Check key dates for gap fee waiving in your region.](#)

## Absences

All services in NSW can now access additional allowable absences.

Go to our website for details and conditions [about absences](#).

[Check key dates for accessing additional allowable absences in your region.](#)

## Other support

Go to our website for more information about:

- [support for services](#)
- [support for families](#)
- [if you have to close](#)
- [action you can take](#).



## COVID-19 hotspot update: more information about business continuity payments

We know providers and services in Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots are keen to know more about business continuity payments announced this week.

**There is now [information on our website that gives more details about the conditions of the business continuity payments](#), including:**

- reference fortnights
- attendance rates
- other Commonwealth support
- waiving gap fees, and
- staffing levels.

### We'll contact you soon

You do not need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you soon with details on how to apply for business continuity payments.

### Important: update your details

To ensure you receive an offer for a business continuity payment, please update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System.

Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.



## Business continuity payments: we'll contact you

As of 23 August, child care services will get business continuity payments during COVID-19 lockdowns.

**You do not need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you soon with details on how to apply for payments.**

Please update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System. Do this via the [Provider Entry Portal](#) or your third-party software.

Business continuity payments will be made to services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) if:

- the Commonwealth hotspot runs for more than 7 days and the state or territory government has limited who can access child care, or
- the Commonwealth hotspot extends beyond 28 days.

[Check dates for business continuity payments in eligible regions.](#)

## Gap fee waivers, additional allowable absences

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) that run for more than seven days can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home.

Gap fees can be waived from day one where the state or territory has restricted access to child care.

The decision to waive gap fees is one for the individual service.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can also waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) that run for more than seven days can access additional allowable absences. Additional absences are backdated to day one of the Commonwealth hotspot declaration.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

[Visit our website for information](#) on the conditions for payments, gap fee waivers and additional allowable absences.

## COVID-19: stay informed

We encourage you to stay informed about COVID-19 restrictions across Australia.

Details about restrictions in your area and how they affect your operations can be found on your [state or territory COVID-19 response website](#).



For information about Australian Government support, [go to our COVID-19 webpage](#).

We regularly give updates on what restrictions mean for child care in affected regions on our [announcements page](#).

## Survey: help us better inform you

Time is running out to complete our provider information survey.

Help us better inform you about early childhood and child care policy and issues by [completing the 10-minute survey](#).

It has never been more important to know how best to reach you. Answering the survey will ensure we can better communicate with you.

Please also share the [survey link](#) with your colleagues.

The survey will not collect personal information and all responses will remain anonymous.

The survey closes Tuesday 31 August.

## Evidence required for ACCS applications

From 1 July, we extended the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) backdating period from 28 days to up to 13 weeks for exceptional circumstances.

However, we have received a large number of applications that don't include evidence of an exceptional circumstance.

We appreciate your patience as we seek to assess and complete these as quickly as possible.

When applying to backdate an ACCS (child wellbeing) Certificate or Determination, your evidence must demonstrate the relevant exceptional circumstances.

This is in addition to the evidence required to show that a child is considered at risk for the purposes of ACCS (child wellbeing).

You can check and upload the additional evidence to a provisional application in your third-party software or via the [Provider Entry Point](#).

More information can be found in section 36 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

## Early Childhood Educators' Day

Early Childhood Educators' Day is on Wednesday 1 September.

The day recognises the contribution of Australia's educators to the wellbeing and healthy development of young children.



[Click here for more information on how to get involved.](#)

## Wear It Purple Day is Friday

Wear purple this Friday 27 August to celebrate supportive, safe, empowering and inclusive environments for rainbow young people.

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



## Business continuity payments for child care services in lockdown

As of 23 August, child care services will get business continuity payments until the end of COVID-19 lockdowns if they meet conditions.

**You do not need to call the CCS Helpdesk. We will contact you soon with details on how to apply for payments.**

Business continuity payments will be made to services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) if:

- the Commonwealth hotspot runs for more than 7 days and the state or territory government has limited who can access child care, or
- the Commonwealth hotspot extends beyond 28 days.

[Check dates for business continuity payments in eligible regions.](#)

### Payments

Business continuity payments will be based on the service type:

- Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care services will get fortnightly payments of 25% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.
- Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and vacation care services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.

Payments will be based on revenue in a specified fortnight before the lockdown.

### Eligibility

This support is now available for services in affected areas of Greater Sydney, Australian Capital Territory, and OSHC services in metropolitan Melbourne.

If current lockdowns continue, all other services in metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and regional NSW will become eligible.

Payments for services in these locations will be backdated to 23 August.

We will write to services if they become eligible for a business continuity payment.

### Gap fee waivers, additional allowable absences

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) that run for more than seven days can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home.



The decision to waive gap fees is one for the individual service. Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can also waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) that run for more than seven days can access additional allowable absences. Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

[Visit our website for information](#) on the conditions for payments, gap fee waivers and additional allowable absences.





## BREAKING: Business continuity payments for child care services in the ACT

Child care services in the Australian Capital Territory will get fortnightly business continuity payments from today (Monday 23 August) until lockdown is lifted.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Education Minister Alan Tudge [announced the measure](#) in response to the impact of extended lockdowns because of COVID-19.

### Child care

**Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care services will get fortnightly payments of 25% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 17 to 30 May 2021.

### Outside School Hours Care

**OSHC services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 17 to 30 May 2021.

### Vacation care

**Vacation care services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 26 June to 11 July.

### Eligible areas

All services across care types in the ACT are eligible for business continuity payments if they meet the conditions outlined.

### Conditions

Business continuity payments are contingent on services:

- having reasonable expectations attendance will drop below 50%
- not accessing other Commonwealth Government funded business supports
- waiving gap fees for all families whose children are not attending
- maintaining staffing levels, and
- agreeing to a fee freeze for the duration of business continuity payments.



Payments continue until the hotspot declaration ends.

## How to apply

We will provide details about how to apply and how payments will be made soon.

## Gap fee waivers and additional allowable absences

Services in the ACT can [waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences](#).

Business continuity payments are in addition to these measures.

## More information

[Read more about these business continuity payments](#).



## BREAKING: Business continuity payments for Melbourne OSHC services

Outside School Hours Care services in Greater Melbourne will get fortnightly business continuity payments from today (Monday 23 August) until lockdown is lifted.

All other services in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria will also become eligible from 29 August, with payments backdated to today.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Education Minister Alan Tudge [announced the measures](#) in response to the impact of extended lockdowns because of COVID-19.

### Outside School Hours Care

**OSHC services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 17 to 30 May 2021.

### Vacation care

**Vacation care services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 27 June to 11 July.

### Eligible areas

OSHC services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Greater Melbourne will get business continuity payments if they meet the conditions outlined:

Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Golden Plains, Greater Dandenong, Greater Geelong, Hobson Bay, Hume, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Melton, Monash, Moonee Valley, Moorabool, Moreland, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Yarra, Yarra Ranges.

### Conditions

Business continuity payments are contingent on services:

- having reasonable expectations attendance will drop below 50%
- not accessing other Commonwealth Government funded business supports
- waiving gap fees for all families whose children are not attending
- maintaining staffing levels, and



- agreeing to a fee freeze for the duration of business continuity payments.

Payments continue until the hotspot declaration ends.

## How to apply

We will provide details about how to apply and how payments will be made soon.

## Gap fee waivers, additional allowable absences

Services across Victoria can [waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences](#).

Business continuity payments are in addition to these measures.

## More information

[Read more about these business continuity payments](#).



## BREAKING: Business continuity payments for child care services in Greater Sydney

Child care and Outside School Hours Care services in Greater Sydney will get fortnightly business continuity payments from today (Monday 23 August) until lockdown is lifted.

All other services in New South Wales will also become eligible from 28 August, with payments backdated to today.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Education Minister Alan Tudge [announced the measure](#) in response to the impact of extended lockdowns because of COVID-19.

### Child care

**Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care services will get fortnightly payments of 25% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 17 to 30 May 2021.

### Outside School Hours Care

**OSHC services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 17 to 30 May 2021.

### Vacation care

**Vacation care services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

The reference fortnight for calculating your revenue is 2 April – 18 April.

### Eligible areas

Services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Greater Sydney will get business continuity payments if they meet the conditions outlined:

City of Sydney, Bayside, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Burwood, Canada Bay, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury/Bankstown, Central Coast, Cumberland, Fairfield, Georges River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Parramatta, Penrith, Randwick, Ryde, Shellharbour, Strathfield, Sutherland Shire, The Hills Shire, Waverley, Willoughby, Wollondilly, Wollongong, Woollahra.

### Conditions

Business continuity payments are contingent on services:



- having reasonable expectations attendance will drop below 50%
- not accessing other Commonwealth Government funded business supports
- waiving gap fees for all families whose children are not attending
- maintaining staffing levels, and
- agreeing to a fee freeze for the duration of business continuity payments.

Payments continue until the hotspot declaration ends.

Services already getting JobSaver can choose to either keep receiving JobSaver or apply for this business continuity payment.

## How to apply

We will provide details about how to apply and how payments will be made soon.

## Gap fee waivers and additional allowable absences

Services in Greater Sydney can [waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences](#).

Business continuity payments are in addition to these measures.

## More information

[Read more about these business continuity payments](#).



## BREAKING: Business continuity payments for child care services in lockdown

Child care services will get business continuity payments from today (23 August) during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Business continuity payments will be made to services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) if:

- the Commonwealth hotspot runs for more than 7 days and the state or territory government has limited who can access child care, or
- the Commonwealth hotspot extends beyond 28 days.

### Payments

Business continuity payments will be based on the type of service you run.

**Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care services will get fortnightly payments of 25% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

**Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and vacation care services will get separate fortnightly payments of 40% of their pre-lockdown revenue calculated up to the hourly cap.**

Payments will be based on your revenue in a specified fortnight before the lockdown.

### Conditions

Business continuity payments are contingent on services:

- having reasonable expectations attendance will drop below 50%
- not accessing other Commonwealth Government-funded business supports
- waiving gap fees for all families whose children are not attending
- maintaining staffing levels, and
- agreeing to a fee freeze for the duration of business continuity payments.

### Eligibility

This support will immediately benefit services in affected areas of Greater Sydney, Australian Capital Territory, and OSHC services in metropolitan Melbourne.

If current lockdowns continue, all other services in metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and regional NSW will become eligible. Payments will be backdated to today.



We will write to services if they become eligible for a business continuity payment.

**Further information on how payments will be made will be provided shortly.**

[Check key dates for business continuity payments in eligible regions.](#)

## Gap fees, additional allowable absences

Services in Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots also may be able to waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences.

Business continuity payments are in addition to these measures.

## More information

We regularly update our website with information about [COVID-19 support for the early childhood sector](#).

[Read the media release from Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Education Minister Alan Tudge.](#)





## COVID-19 in Victoria: what the lockdown changes mean for services

**Services in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria can now waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences.**

On 21 August the Victorian Government announced that from 1pm Regional Victoria will enter lockdown and additional measures will come into effect in Metro Melbourne.

Details can be found on the [Victorian Government's COVID-19 response website](#).

During the lockdown, early learning centres, child care, family day care are closed but open to vulnerable children and the children of authorised workers if they cannot be supervised at home.

On 21 August 2021 the Australian Government declared the state of Victoria a [Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot](#). This triggers extra support for the sector.

### Gap fee waivers

**Services in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria can now waive gap fees.**

Gap fee waivers is an opt-in measure. You can waive fees from 13 August 2021 in Metropolitan Melbourne and from 22 August 2021 in Regional Victoria. This applies to all service types.

In addition, services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

[Check key dates for gap fee waiving in your region.](#)

### Absences

**Services in metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria can now access additional allowable absences.**

The absences are available until the end of the Commonwealth Hotspot declaration.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

You do not need to do anything to access these absences.

The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the hotspot declaration period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Check key dates for accessing additional allowable absences in your region.](#)



## Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order.

Providers and services in Victoria may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your state or territory regulatory authority.

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19 in NSW: what regional lockdown extension means for child care

On 19 August, the New South Wales Government announced the regional NSW lockdown will be extended.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Also on 19 August, the Australian Government extended the Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot for all of NSW.

During the lockdown, child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed to close by NSW Health.

Keep your eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 ECEC services webpage](#) in the event that advice around child care changes.

### Gap fees

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) that run for more than seven days can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home.

All services in NSW can now waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home during the lockdown.

The decision to waive gap fees is one for the individual service.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can also waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

[Check this table for key dates for gap fee waiving in your region.](#)

### Absences

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) that run for more than seven days can access additional allowable absences.

All services in NSW can now access additional allowable absences.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

You do not need to do anything to access these absences. The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the Commonwealth Hotspot period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Check this table for key dates for accessing additional allowable absences in your region.](#)



## Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order.

Providers and services in NSW may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Services can apply for funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## Support for families

Families experiencing difficulties can apply for help under the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19 in NT: support for child care services in Katherine lockdown

On 19 August, the Australian Government extended the Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspot in Katherine Town Council, including Tindal.

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home because the state or territory government has limited who can access child care.

During the lockdown, child care is open only to the children of essential workers.

Details are on the [NT Government's COVID-19 response website](#).

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Northern Territory Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Gap fees

Services in Katherine Town Council, including Tindal, can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home during the lockdown.

The lockdown in Katherine ended at 12pm, Friday 20 August.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can also waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

The decision to waive gap fees is one for the individual service.

[Check this table for key dates for gap fee waiving in your region](#).

### Absences

Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

### Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order.

Providers and services in Katherine Town Council, including Tindal, may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, [visit business.gov.au](http://visit.business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Services can apply for funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.



## Support for families

Families experiencing difficulties can apply for help under the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Northern Territory Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19 in NT update: extra support for services in Greater Darwin, Katherine hotspots

On 18 August, Greater Darwin and Katherine were declared Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspots.

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home because the state or territory government has restricted access to child care for children of essential workers only.

The hotspot declaration covers the Belyuen Community Government Council, City of Darwin, City of Palmerston, Litchfield Council, Wagait Shire and Katherine Town Council (including Tindal), and the localities of Bynoe, Charlotte, Cox Peninsula, Dundee Beach, Dundee Downs and Dundee Forest.

### Gap fees

This means services in the hotspot area will be able to waive gap fees from the first day of the declaration for the duration of the hotspot.

Gap fee waiving helps parents keep their children enrolled without having to pay for a service they are not using.

Gap fee waivers is an opt-in measure. Where services choose to waive gap fees, they can do so either in full or partially.

Charging practices are a business decision for individual services.

Where services choose to waive gap fees, they continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

[Check this table for a list of regions that can now waive gap fees.](#)

### Absences

At this stage, there is no change to absences in relation to the lockdown. Services in a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot can access additional allowable absences only when the declaration exceeds seven days.

Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason. These were reset on 1 July 2021.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

### Support for families

Families experiencing difficulty may be eligible for support under [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).



Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Support for services

Providers and services in the Northern Territory may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, [visit business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants can request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Northern Territory COVID-19 response website](#) for local information.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Northern Territory Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.





## COVID-19 national update: extra support for child care services in hotspots

Child care providers and services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspots](#) may now be able to waive gap fees and access extra absences.

[This table lists if you can and when you can.](#)

We remind you to continue to monitor our website for updates as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

We will update you in each state and territory as needed about how restrictions affect child care settings and the support we offer.

### Gap fee waiving

Services in Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots can now waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home if either of the following applies:

- **The Commonwealth Hotspot runs for more than seven days.** If this applies, gap fees can be waived from day eight of the hotspot declaration.
- **The Commonwealth Hotspot runs for seven days or fewer, but the state or territory government has limited who can access child care.** This could include limiting access to only vulnerable children, children whose parents can't work from home, or the children of essential workers. These circumstances differ across jurisdictions. [Check your state or territory government website](#) to see what applies to your region. If this applies, gap fees can be waived from day one of the hotspot declaration.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can also waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

Where you choose to waive gap fees, you will continue to receive CCS.

[Check this table for regions that can waive gap fees and when this starts.](#)

### Extra absences

Services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

**You do not need to do anything to access these absences.**

If the hotspot declaration extends for more than seven days, the Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during that period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.



[Check this table for regions that can access additional allowable absences and when this starts.](#)

## Stay informed

We encourage you to stay informed as state and territory governments place COVID-19 restrictions across Australia.

Details about restrictions in your area and how they affect your operations can be found on your [state or territory COVID-19 response website](#).

We provide answers to your commonly asked questions about Australian Government support on our website. We regularly update our website.

[Go to our COVID-19 webpage.](#)

We also provide updates on what restrictions mean for child care in affected regions.

[Go to Early Childhood announcements.](#)

## Survey: we want your feedback

Help us better inform you about early childhood and child care policy and issues by [completing a 10-minute survey](#).

Please also share the [survey link](#) with your colleagues.

The survey will not collect personal information and all responses will remain anonymous.

**It has never been more important to us to know how best to reach you. Answering the survey will ensure we can better communicate with you.**



## COVID-19 in NSW: lockdown update, extra support for child care services

We want to update you about the evolving situation with the COVID-19 outbreaks in New South Wales and the impact on child care services.

Details about NSW lockdowns can be found on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#).

See important information below about support available across the regions.

### Gap fees and absences for extended lockdowns

Child care services in the NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs) below can now waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home.

Families at these services can also access additional allowable absences.

This follows the extension of Commonwealth hotspot declarations for longer than seven days in:

- Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Shellharbour and Wollongong
- Bathurst Regional Council, and the shires of Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Narromine, Walgett and Warren
- Dubbo Regional Council
- Tamworth Regional Council, Byron Shire, Richmond Valley, Ballina Shire and Lismore
- Armidale Regional Council
- City of Cessnock, City of Lake Macquarie, Dungog Shire, Maitland, Muswellbrook Shire, Newcastle, Port Stephens Council and Singleton Council.

[Check this table for a list of regions that can waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences and the relevant dates for which these measures commence.](#)

### Rest of NSW

At this stage, there is no change to fee charging or absences for services elsewhere in New South Wales.

If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NSW Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.



# Other support available

## Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

## Stay up to date

We continue to update the sector on restrictions, Australian Government support and the impact on child care services. Please check in regularly to our [Early Childhood COVID-19 home page](#).

## Support for services

[The COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Providers and services in NSW may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, [visit business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your state or territory regulatory authority.

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.



- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19 in NT: what lockdown in Greater Darwin and Katherine means for child care

The Northern Territory Government announced a three-day lockdown for Greater Darwin and Katherine starting at 12pm ACST on Monday 16 August.

Details can be found on the [NT Government's COVID-19 response website](#).

The lockdown covers the City of Darwin, City of Palmerston, Litchfield Council, Wagait Shire, Belyuen Shire, Dundee, Bynoe, Charlotte, Cox Peninsula, and Municipality of Katherine including Tindal.

**School and child care facilities are open only for children of essential workers and vulnerable children.**

At this stage, there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown.

Services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) may be able to access gap fee waivers and additional allowable absences. We'll let you know if there is a hotspot declaration for the Northern Territory.

More information about [gap fee waivers and additional allowable absences](#) is available on our website.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NT Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Absences

Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

### Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Stay up to date

We continue to update the sector on restrictions, Australian Government support and the impact on child care services. Please check in regularly to our [Early Childhood COVID-19 home page](#).

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available on the Services Australia website.



## Support for families

Families experiencing difficulty may be eligible for support under [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Support for services

Providers and services in the Northern Territory may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, [visit business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants can request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the PEP or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Northern Territory COVID-19 response website](#) for local information



## COVID-19 in Victoria: what lockdown extension means for child care services

On 16 August, the Victorian Government announced that lockdown in metropolitan Melbourne will be extended.

Details can be found on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Additionally, on 16 August the Australian Government [extended the current Commonwealth Hotspot](#) for Greater Melbourne, City of Greater Geelong, Moorabool and Golden Plains.

**Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home if the Commonwealth hotspot runs for more than seven days. They can also access additional allowable absences.**

### Gap fee waivers

Child care services in Greater Melbourne, City of Greater Geelong, Moorabool and Golden Plains can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home during the current lockdown.

You can waive fees from 13 August 2021 and this applies to all service types.

In addition, services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Absences

Services in metropolitan Melbourne can access additional allowable absences from 6 August 2021. The absences are available until the end of the Commonwealth Hotspot declaration.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

You do not need to do anything to access these absences.

The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the hotspot declaration period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Learn about absences in a Commonwealth-declared hotspot on our website.](#)

### Stay up to date

We continue to update the sector on restrictions, Australian Government support and the impact on child care services. Please check in regularly to our [Early Childhood COVID-19 home page](#).





## Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Providers and services in Victoria may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the PEP or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID in ACT: what lockdown extension means for child care services

On 16 August, the ACT Government announced the current lockdown will be extended.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Additionally, on 16 August the Australian Government [extended the current Commonwealth Hotspot for the ACT](#).

### Absences

Services in the ACT can now access additional allowable absences from 13 August 2021. The absences are available until the end of the Commonwealth Hotspot declaration.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

You do not need to do anything to access these absences.

The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the hotspot declaration period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Learn about absences in a Commonwealth-declared hotspot on our website](#).

### Gap fee waivers

Gap fee waivers is an opt-in measure. As previously advised, services in the ACT can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home during the current lockdown.

You can waive fees from 13 August 2021 and this applies to all service types.

In addition, services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Stay up to date

We continue to update the sector on restrictions, Australian Government support and the impact on child care services.

Please check in regularly to our [Early Childhood COVID-19 home page](#).

### Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order.



Providers and services in the ACT may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## Breaking: gap fees waived for families in ACT

Child care services in the ACT can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home during the current lockdown.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

This follows [today's announcement](#) that child care services can waive gap fees where a state or territory government order only allows access to child care services in particular circumstances.

Services in the ACT can waive gap fees from 13 August until the end of the lockdown.

Services can also waive gap fees if they are directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 until 31 December 2021.

[Learn more about waiving gap fees on our website](#).

### Absences

Services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days. We'll let you know if the hotspot declaration for the ACT is extended.

### Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order.

Providers and services in the ACT may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

### Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

### If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.



These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## Gap fees waived for families in COVID-19 hotspots

Child care services in Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspots that run for more than seven days can now waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home.

Education Minister Alan Tudge announced today that child care services can waive gap fees from the first day of any hotspot declaration exceeding a week.

The measure will also allow child care services to waive gap fees if a state or territory government order only allows access to child care services in particular circumstances. Such circumstances could include:

- children who are vulnerable or disadvantaged
- children whose parents can't work from home
- children of essential workers.

These circumstances differ across jurisdictions. You should [check your state or territory government website](#) to see what applies to your region.

Gap fee waiving helps parents keep their children enrolled without having to pay for a service they are not using. Where services choose to waive gap fees, they will continue to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

Check our website to see [key dates for gap fee waivers and additional allowable absences](#) for your region.

[Families can also access additional allowable absences](#) once a hotspot declaration period exceeds seven days. Allowable absences are backdated to the first day of the current lockdown.

Families experiencing a loss of income, such as casual workers or those in self-isolation, may also be eligible for support through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Visit our [COVID-19 information for the early childhood education and care sector webpage](#) for advice and updates.



## COVID-19 and child care: stay up to date

We regularly update our website to reflect the changing circumstances of how COVID-19 is impacting on child care settings across Australia.

[Visit our COVID-19 home page](#) to find out what support is available to you. This includes access to additional allowable absences in Commonwealth-declared hotspots for lockdowns that extend longer than seven days.

## Special Circumstances: extra support

If your service viability has been impacted by an unexpected event, including COVID-19, you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#).

You can apply for Special Circumstances funding after the event has occurred and after accessing other COVID support

## Survey: how should we inform you?

We want your feedback so we can better inform you about early childhood and child care policy and issues.

[Complete this short 10-minute survey](#) to help us improve your access to relevant and timely information.

As well, we would like you to share [the survey link](#) with your colleagues.

The survey will not collect personal information and all responses will remain anonymous.

The survey closes on Friday 20 August.

## Jobs Fairs: helping you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Job Fairs with a focus on aged care, disability services, and early childhood education and care.

These events will be held on:

- Tuesday 21 September at C.ex Coffs International Stadium, Coffs Harbour, NSW
- Thursday 23 September at Panthers Port Macquarie, NSW.

To attend, and for more information, email [CareSector@dese.gov.au](mailto:CareSector@dese.gov.au) by COB Friday 20 August.



The Australian Government is also hosting other job fairs around the country to give employers an opportunity to recruit for a variety of roles and to connect with employment service providers.

These will be held in:

- Adelaide on Wednesday 18 August
- Cairns on Friday 20 August
- Perth on Tuesday 7 September
- Bundaberg on Thursday 16 September
- Geelong on Wednesday 22 September.

Limited booths will be available because of COVID-19.

For more information visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email [JobsFairs@dese.gov.au](mailto:JobsFairs@dese.gov.au).

Please note, these job fairs have been postponed because of COVID-19:

- Ipswich on Friday 13 August
- Central Coast on Friday 3 September
- Hunter Region on Thursday 9 September
- Illawarra South Coast on Tuesday 14 September.

## Updated Guide to ACCS (child wellbeing)

The [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy Guide \(ACCS\) \(child wellbeing\)](#) has been updated to help providers and services who administer the ACCS (child wellbeing).

You can read it online or download a print version.

Find more resources, including such guides, [on our website](#).





12 August 2021 – targeted update

## UPDATE: what ACT lockdown means for child care

Following our earlier email, we'd like to clarify that early childhood education and care services, including Outside School Hours Care, can remain open for staff, vulnerable children and the children whose parents or carers cannot work from home.

More information is available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#).



## COVID-19 in ACT: what 7-day lockdown means for child care services

The ACT Government has announced a seven-day lockdown starting 5pm on Thursday 12 August.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

During the lockdown, early childhood education and care services, including Outside School Hours Care, can remain open for vulnerable children and the children of essential workers.

At this stage, there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown.

If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the ACT Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order. More information will be available soon on the Services Australia website.

Providers and services in the ACT may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

### Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).



## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19 support: Additional allowable absences for child care services in Melbourne

### **Services in Metropolitan Melbourne can now access additional allowable absences.**

This follows a seven-day extension to the lockdown in Metropolitan Melbourne and a Commonwealth Hotspot Declaration.

Details about the lockdown can be found on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Metropolitan Melbourne comprises the following Local Government Areas (LGAs): Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Melton, Monash, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse, Whittlesea, Wyndham (except little River), Yarra, Yarra Ranges.

### **We'll backdate the additional allowable absences for these services to 5 August 2021.**

The absences are available until the end of the hotspot declaration. Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

### **You do not need to do anything to access these absences.**

The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the hotspot declaration period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Learn more about absences in a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot on our website.](#)

## Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

## Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Providers and services in Victoria may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.



## Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19: what Dubbo lockdown means for child care

On 11 August, the New South Wales Government announced a seven-day lockdown for the Dubbo Local Government Area (LGA) from 1pm Wednesday 11 August. The Dubbo LGA includes Wellington, Wongarbron, Geurie, Brocklehurst, Stuart Town, Mumbil and Eumungerie. Details can be found on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#).

The NSW Government also provides this [information specific to Early Childhood Education and Care services](#).

During the lockdown, child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed to close by NSW Health.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown.

If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

Dubbo joins the other NSW lockdowns for Northern NSW, Tamworth, Armidale, Newcastle and the Hunter. You can visit our website for more information on these [lockdowns, gap fees and the support available](#).

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NSW Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves

### Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Support for services

[The COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Providers and services in NSW may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, [visit business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.



## Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## NSW COVID-19 update: gap fees, new lockdowns, support for child care services

We want to update you about the evolving situation with the COVID-19 outbreaks in New South Wales and the impact on child care services.

**Please note, the ability to waive gap fees is different between Greater Sydney and other lockdown areas.**

In Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour, services can waive gap fees. This provision does not apply in the case of the Northern NSW, Tamworth, Armidale, and Newcastle lockdowns.

Details on those lockdowns can be found on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#).

The NSW Government also provides [this information specific to Early Childhood Education and Care services](#).

During the lockdowns, child care services are considered an essential service and may remain open, unless directed by NSW Health.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NSW Government and peak organisations as the situation evolves.

## Northern NSW, Tamworth, Armidale, Newcastle/Hunter lockdowns

The New South Wales Government has announced lockdowns for:

- Byron, Richmond Valley, Lismore and Ballina LGAs from 6pm Monday 9 August
- Tamworth LGA from 5pm Monday 9 August
- Armidale LGA from 5pm Saturday 7 August
- Newcastle and the Hunter from 5pm Thursday 5 August (namely, the LGAs of Newcastle, Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Port Stephens and Singleton).

At this stage, there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.





# Greater Sydney lockdown

The New South Wales Government announced a lockdown for Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour, from 26 June to 28 August.

## Gap fee waiving in Greater Sydney

From Monday 19 July, child care services in LGAs in Greater Sydney subject to stay-at-home orders can waive gap fees for parents on days they choose to keep their children at home during the lockdown.

The LGAs are: Sydney, Woollahra, Randwick, Waverley, Bayside, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Burwood, Camden, Central Coast, Campbelltown, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, George's River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Inner West, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Parramatta, Penrith, Ryde, Shellharbour, Strathfield, Sutherland, The Hills Shire, Wollondilly, Willoughby, Wollongong.

Services in these LGAs can choose to waive gap fees during the lockdown, either in full or partially, but are not required to. Charging practices are a business decision for individual services.

## Additional allowable absences

Services in the Greater Sydney COVID-19 hotspot, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Shellharbour and Wollongong, can now access additional allowable absences.

We'll backdate the additional allowable absences for services in the Greater Sydney hotspot to the start of the lockdown.

[For more information see this webpage.](#)

# Support available

## Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

## Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Providers and services in NSW may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.



## Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19 in QLD: what lockdown in Cairns and Yarrabah means for child care

The Queensland Government has announced a three-day lockdown for the Cairns and Yarrabah Local Government Areas (LGAs) from 4pm AEST Sunday 8 August to 4pm AEST Wednesday 11 August.

Details can be found on the [Queensland Government COVID-19 response website](#).

**School and child care facilities in Cairns and Yarrabah LGAs are open for children of essential workers and vulnerable children.**

At this stage, there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to this lockdown.

If Child Care Subsidy is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Queensland Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

### Support for families

Families experiencing difficulty may be eligible for support under [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

### Support for services

Providers and services in Queensland may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants can request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.



## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Queensland Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local information.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Queensland Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.



## COVID-19: What Victorian lockdown means for child care

On 5 August, the Victorian Government announced a seven-day lockdown for all of Victoria. Details can be found on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#).

During the lockdown, child care, family day care, early learning centres and kinders will remain open.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown.

If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Victorian Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Providers and services in Victoria may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

### Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

### If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.



These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19: Seven-day lockdown for Newcastle and the Hunter

The New South Wales Government announced yesterday a seven-day lockdown for Newcastle and the Hunter. Details can be found on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#).

The affected Local Government Areas include Newcastle, Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Port Stephens and Singleton.

Early childhood education and care services can continue to operate during the lockdown.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the New South Wales Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

### Support for services

Providers and services in New South Wales may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that on this date all children had 42 absence days available to them.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.



Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#) for local updates.





## Additional allowable absences for Victoria

This week [we announced](#) services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days.

**Services in Victoria will receive additional allowable absences in recognition of the recent hotspot declaration.**

Services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs) will have additional allowable absences applied from **15 to 27 July**:

Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Melton, Monash, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse, Whittlesea, Yarra, Yarra Ranges, Wyndham, Moorabool, Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliff, Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale and Surf Coast Shire.

Services in the Bass Coast Shire, including Phillip Island, will have additional allowable absences applied from **17 to 27 July**.

Services in Mildura will have additional allowable absences applied from **18 to 27 July**.

**You do not need to do anything to access these absences.** The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the hotspot declaration period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

Please ensure your contact details, particularly email addresses, are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.



## Extra absences for child care services in declared COVID-19 hotspots

[The Australian Government has announced](#) child care services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days.

**Families will not have to use their 42 days of allowable absences during the lockdown.**

Additional absences will be available until the end of the hotspot declaration.

You can [find out if you are in a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) on the Department of Health website.

We routinely email providers and services in specific states and territories to update them on support available to them amid the evolving situation.

[Read about the announcement.](#)

## Survey: help us to better inform you

We want your feedback so we can better inform you about early childhood and child care policy.

We use a range of channels to help providers access information and get help. This includes our website, email newsletter, social media, and CCS Helpdesk.

Given these times, it has never been more important for us to reach you with important information. We want to know how best to do that, and via your preferred channel.

[We're asking you to complete this survey.](#) It will take you less than 10 minutes.

The survey closes on Friday 20 August.

We would also like you to share the survey link with staff at your service. This survey will not collect personal information and all responses will remain anonymous.

## Session reports cut-off this Sunday

You have only until Sunday to finalise session reports for the 2020–21 Child Care Subsidy (CCS) year.

From Sunday 8 August, the Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2020–21 CCS year.

**You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 13 July 2020 and 11 July 2021.**



Finalising session reports by this deadline is essential for balancing family CCS entitlements for the CCS year just gone.

## CCS entitlement display issue resolved

Services Australia has resolved the Child Care Subsidy System display issue in which providers and services were unable to see updated entitlements information for the period from 1 to 11 July 2021.

Payment calculations were not affected.

For more information, please contact your software provider.

## Financial help for very remote teachers

The Australian Government supports teachers, including early childhood teachers, in very remote areas with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts.

We provide two types of assistance. We can waive indexation on accumulated HELP debt, and reduce accumulated HELP debt.

**Early childhood teachers at very remote Centre Based Day Care (CBDC) services may be eligible for this initiative.**

[Check if your CBDC service is in a very remote area](#) and let your teachers know.

[Applications for indexation waivers are open.](#)

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

## Jobs Fairs: helping you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies, and to connect with employment service providers.

Job Fairs will be held in:

- Adelaide on Wednesday 18 August
- Cairns on Friday 20 August
- Perth on Tuesday 7 September
- Bundaberg on Thursday 16 September
- Geelong on Wednesday 22 September.

If you have vacancies, you can register to exhibit for free.



For more information visit the [Exhibitor Information](#) page or email [JobsFairs@dese.gov.au](mailto:JobsFairs@dese.gov.au).

These events will follow COVID-safe event procedures.

Please note: Due to COVID-19 lockdowns, these Job Fairs have been postponed:

- Brisbane - Friday 6 August
- Ipswich - Friday 13 August
- Central Coast – Friday 3 September
- Hunter Region – Thursday 9 September
- Illawarra South Coast – Tuesday 14 September.

## Today is Children's Day 2021

Today is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

This year's theme is "Proud in culture, strong in spirit". This highlights the need to support family and community connections to help children achieve spiritual and cultural wellbeing, and to form proud cultural identities.

Learn about [Children's Day](#).



## Extra help: additional allowable absences for South East QLD child care services

We have [announced](#) child care services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days.

**Services in South East Queensland under lockdown will have additional absences applied from 31 July until the end of the lockdown.**

Families will not have to use their 42 days of allowable absences during the lockdown.

We'll backdate the additional allowable absences for these services to the start of the lockdown.

Services in the following Local Government Areas will have additional allowable absences applied from 31 July: Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Redland, Logan, Ipswich, Noosa, Gold Coast, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, Somerset and Sunshine Coast.

[Read about the announcement](#)

### Other Government support

A range of other support measures is available for services and families in Queensland.

#### Gap fee waivers

Services can waive gap fees if they are directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 until 31 December 2021.

#### Financial support

The COVID-19 Disaster Payment provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Details about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) are available on the Services Australia website.

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

#### Support for families

Families experiencing difficulty can also apply for support under the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).



## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Queensland Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local information.



## Extra help: additional allowable absences for Greater Sydney child care services

Child care services in the Greater Sydney COVID-19 hotspot, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Shellharbour and Wollongong, can now access additional absences.

We've [announced](#) services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days.

Families will not have to use their 42 days of allowable absences during the lockdown.

We'll backdate the additional allowable absences for services in the Greater Sydney hotspot to the start of the lockdown.

Services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs) will have additional allowable absences applied from 23 June 2021: Bayside, City of Sydney, Canada Bay, Inner West, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra.

Services in the following LGAs will have additional allowable absences applied from 26 June 2021: Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Burwood, Camden, Central Coast, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, George's River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Parramatta, Penrith, Ryde, Shellharbour, Strathfield, Sutherland, Hills Shire, Wollondilly, Willoughby and Wollongong.

Additional absences are available until the end of the hotspot declaration period.

### Other government support

A range of other support is available for services and families in the Greater Sydney hotspot.

#### Gap fee waivers

Services in Greater Sydney subject to stay-at-home orders can waive gap fees for parents on days they choose to keep their children at home during the lockdown.

Services can also waive gap fees if they are directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 until 31 December 2021.

#### Financial support

The JobSaver Payment provides cashflow support to impacted businesses in New South Wales. It is available to businesses with a turnover between \$75,000 and \$250 million that experience a 30% decline in revenue.

Details about the [JobSaver Payment](#) are available on the Service NSW website.



The COVID-19 Disaster Payment provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state public health order.

Details about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) are available on the Services Australia website.

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants can request funding after an event has occurred and after accessing other COVID support.

## Support for families

Families experiencing difficulty can also apply for support under the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local information.





## Breaking: additional allowable absences in COVID-19 hotspots

The [Australian Government has announced](#) child care services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days.

**Families will not have to use their 42 days of allowable absences during the lockdown.**

Additional absences will be available until the end of the hotspot declaration.

This means families will still have allowable absence days to use after the lockdown. It also ensures children remain enrolled and providers can continue to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

You can [find out if you are in a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot](#) on the Department of Health website.

We'll also email providers and services if they are in a COVID-19 hotspot.

Please ensure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information.

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

[Read about the announcement](#)



## COVID-19 in Greater Sydney: Local Area Emergency extended

We have extended the Local Area Emergency (LAE) for Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour, for the period **26 June to 27 August** due to the extension of the state's lockdown.

We have extended the LAE for services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

Sydney, Woollahra, Randwick, Waverley, Bayside, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Burwood, Camden, Central Coast, Campbelltown, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, George's River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Inner West, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Parramatta, Penrith, Ryde, Shellharbour, Strathfield, Sutherland, The Hills Shire, Wollondilly, Willoughby, Wollongong.

Education and care services are considered an essential service and may remain open unless directed to close by NSW Health.

[The NSW Government's COVID-19 guide for ECEC services webpage](#) provides important information for providers and services. This includes advice that families in eight LGAs are encouraged to keep their children home.

Providers and services should remain aware of advice as it is updated.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NSW Government and the sector as the situation evolves.

### Gap fee waivers

From Monday 19 July, services in LGAs in Greater Sydney subject to stay-at-home orders can waive gap fees for parents on days they choose to keep their children at home.

Services can also waive gap fees if they are directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 until 31 December 2021.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

### Absences

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that from this date all children had 42 absence days available to them.

Families whose service is in a declared LAE can access additional absences if they have used their 42 allowable absences. [Learn more about absences during an LAE.](#)



## Support for families

[The Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Support for services

Providers and services in NSW may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local information.



## Update: session reports cut-off 8 August

Providers have until 8 August to submit session reports to Services Australia for the 2020–21 Child Care Subsidy (CCS) year.

From 8 August, the Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2020–21 CCS year.

You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 13 July 2020 and 11 July 2021.

Please note: this corrects advice provided in this newsletter on 22 July.

Finalising session reports by this deadline is essential for balancing (or reconciling) family CCS entitlements for the CCS year just gone.

## Evidence required for ACCS backdating

Since 1 July, we've extended the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) backdating period from 28 days to up to 13 weeks for exceptional circumstances.

However, some services are applying without providing the necessary evidence of exceptional circumstances.

If you have applied to backdate up to 13 weeks without evidence, we may contact you to supply this evidence.

If you cannot meet requirements, your claim may be rejected.

Please note, you can upload the additional evidence to a provisional application without waiting to be contacted.

Details about backdating certificates and determinations in exceptional circumstances are outlined in section 36 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

## Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies, and connect with employment service providers.

Job Fairs will be held in:

- Darwin on Friday 30 July



- Brisbane on Friday 6 August
- Ipswich on Friday 13 August.

For more information or to become an exhibitor visit the [Exhibitor Information](#) page or email [JobsFairs@dese.gov.au](mailto:JobsFairs@dese.gov.au).

We'll provide details on other job fairs across Australia.

These events will follow COVID-safe event procedures.

## COVID-19: stay up to date

We regularly update our website to reflect the changing circumstances of how COVID-19 is impacting the sector across Australia.

[Visit our COVID-19 home page.](#)

[Learn how restrictions affect child care in various states and territories.](#)



## Guide to ACCS (child wellbeing) updated

We've updated the [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy \(ACCS\) \(child wellbeing\)](#) to reflect changes that took effect on 1 July 2021. The guide contains information for providers and services involved in the administration of ACCS (child wellbeing). Changes to ACCS (child wellbeing) include:

- extending the backdating period from 28 days to 13 weeks (in exceptional circumstances),
- extending the determination period for children in foster care from 13 weeks to 12 months, and
- changes to Provider Eligible Enrolments (now Provider Eligible Arrangements).

[Read more about the updated Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\) on our website.](#)

## Session reports cut-off 8 August

Providers have until 8 August to submit session reports to Services Australia for the 2020–21 Child Care Subsidy (CCS) year.

Finalising session reports by this deadline is essential for balancing (or reconciling) family CCS entitlements for the financial year just gone.

From 8 August, the Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2020–21 CCS year.

You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 13 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

## \$100 million in CCCF funding for services

More than \$100 million was awarded to 385 child care providers in the latest round of the [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Open Competitive Grant](#).

The grants, announced across three categories, help services to stay open and increase the number of children accessing care in regional, remote and disadvantaged communities.

A total of 1194 applications were received from 962 child care services under Round 3 of the grant.

[Find out more about the announcement.](#)

## Early Learning Matters Week

Next week, politicians, educators, community leaders and children across Australia will celebrate [Early Learning Matters Week](#).



Organised by Early Childhood Australia, the initiative seeks to raise awareness of what high-quality early childhood education and care looks like, and the ways it supports children's development and wellbeing.

It is also a time for educators to show the community how they help children to develop their cognitive, social and emotional skills.

[Find out how to get involved.](#)

## COVID-19: stay up to date

We regularly update our website to reflect the changing circumstances of how COVID-19 is impacting the sector across Australia.

[Visit our COVID-19 home page.](#)

[Learn how restrictions affect child care in various states and territories.](#)



## COVID-19 in South Australia: 7-day lockdown

The South Australian Government announced on Tuesday 20 July a seven-day lockdown for all of South Australia. Details can be found on the [South Australian Government COVID-19 website](#).

During the lockdown, child care services and schools may remain open for the children of authorised workers and vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families can use their 42 absence days per financial year for any reason.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the South Australian Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) will be made available on the Services Australia website.

### Support for services

Providers and services in South Australia may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that on that date all children had 42 absence days available to them.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).





## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.

Keep an eye on the [South Australian Government COVID-19 website](#) for local updates.



## COVID-19 in NSW: seven-day lockdown for Orange, Blayney and Cabonne

The NSW Government has announced a seven-day lockdown for the Orange, Blayney and Cabonne Local Government Areas. Details can be found on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#).

During the lockdown, child care services remain open.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the Orange LGA lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families can use their 42 absence days per financial year for any reason.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NSW Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) will be made available on the Services Australia website.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that on that date all children had 42 absence days available to them.

[The Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

### Support for services

Providers and services in NSW may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.



## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.

Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local information.



## COVID-19 in Victoria: lockdown extended, Local Area Emergency declared

We've declared a Local Area Emergency for all child care services in Victoria for the period Friday 16 July to Tuesday 27 July due to the seven-day extension of the state's lockdown.

### Absences

Families attending early childhood education and care services in Victoria will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their allowance of 42 absences.

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that from this date, all children had 42 absence days available to them.

Learn more about [absences during an emergency](#).

### Gap fee waiver

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

### Help in an emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#).

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [help in an emergency](#) page.

### Support for families

Families affected by COVID-19 may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).



## For action

Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.

Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 website](#).



## COVID-19 in Victoria: five-day lockdown

The Victorian Government announced on Thursday 15 July a five-day lockdown for all of Victoria. Details can be found on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 website](#).

During the lockdown, child care, family day care, early learning centres and kinders will remain open. All schools will close, except for vulnerable children and children of authorised workers.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging and or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Victorian Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) will be made available on the Services Australia website.

### Support for services

Providers and services in Victoria may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding.

For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#).

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that on this date all children had 42 absence days available to them.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).



## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.

Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government COVID-19 website](#) for local updates.



16 July 2021 – targeted update

## \$100 million for child care services in disadvantaged communities

More than 700 applications were successful in the latest round of the [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Open Competitive Grant](#).

More than \$100 million will go to 385 child care providers to help them stay open and increase the number of children accessing care in regional, remote and disadvantaged communities.

A total of 1194 applications were received from 962 child care services under Round 3 of the grant.

Funding will be allocated across three financial years, from 2021 to 2024.

[Find out more about the announcement.](#)

[Find out more about CCCF grants.](#)





## COVID-19 and NSW: extra support for child care services in lockdown

Extra support is now available for child care services and families during the extended COVID-19 lockdown in New South Wales.

### Gap fee waivers

Even though child care services remain open in NSW, from Monday 19 July services in Local Government Areas (LGAs) subject to stay-at-home orders can waive gap fees for parents on days they choose to keep their children at home.

As previously announced, services can also waive gap fees if they are directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 until 31 December 2021.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

The Australian Government has announced an increase to the COVID-19 Disaster Payment. More information will be made available [on the Services Australia website](#).

### Local Area Emergency extended

We've extended the Local Area Emergency (LAE) for services in affected LGAs. The LAE period now runs from 26 June to 30 July for services in the following 36 LGAs:

City of Sydney, Municipality of Woollahra, City of Randwick, Municipality of Waverley, Bayside Council, Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Municipality of Burwood, Camden Council, Central Coast Council, City of Campbelltown, City of Canada Bay, City of Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland City Council, City of Fairfield, George's River Council, City of Hawkesbury, Hornsby Shire, Municipality of Hunter's Hill, Inner West Council, Ku-ring-gai Council, Lane Cove Council, City of Liverpool, Mosman Council, North Sydney Council, Northern Beaches Council, City of Parramatta, City of Penrith, City of Ryde, Shellharbour City Council, Municipality of Strathfield, Sutherland Shire, The Hills Shire, Wollondilly Shire, City of Willoughby, and Wollongong City Council.

### Absences

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that from this date all children had 42 absence days available to them.

Families whose service is in a declared LAE can access additional absences if they have used their 42 allowable absences. [Learn more about absences during an LAE](#).

### Existing support

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#).



Families affected by COVID-19 may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## For action

Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.

Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.



## CCS entitlement display issue

Providers and services viewing entitlements, including absences used and annual cap, in the Child Care Subsidy System will not see updated information for the period from 1 to 11 July 2021.

For this period, the system is still showing the absence count and annual cap from last financial year. However, entitlements viewed for the period of 12 July onwards will see re-set entitlement usage information.

Regardless, payment calculations are not affected.

Services Australia is aware of the issue and it is scheduled to be resolved soon.

If you require further information, please contact your software provider.

## Session reports deadline approaching

Providers must submit all session reports to Services Australia for the 2020–21 Child Care Subsidy (CCS) year by 8 August.

Session reports must be accurate and finalised because they are essential for balancing (or reconciling) family CCS entitlements for the financial year just gone.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2020–21 CCS year from 8 August.

You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 13 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

## New CCS rates from 12 July

CCS rates changed on Monday 12 July.

CCS rates are adjusted each year based on the Consumer Price Index. That means the CCS family income thresholds and hourly rate caps have changed.

The new rates took effect from 12 July because this was the first CCS fortnight of the new financial year.

[Learn about the CCS rate changes on our website.](#)

## Wage support to hire trainees

Early childhood education and care services that take on trainees may be eligible for an Australian Government subsidy.



Eligible services can get a subsidy of 50% of a trainee's gross wages. The subsidy will pay up to \$7,000 per quarter for wages paid in the 12-month period from the date of commencement.

You may be eligible if you engage a new trainee between 5 October 2020 and 31 March 2022 who is:

- undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification, including Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care, and
- has a training contract formally approved by the state training authority.

Exclusions and existing worker eligibility applies.

[Learn about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

## Financial help for very remote teachers

Do you run a Centre Based Day Care Service in very remote Australia?

The Australian Government supports teachers, including early childhood teachers, in very remote areas with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts.

We provide two types of assistance. We can:

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

Early childhood teachers at very remote Centre Based Day Care (CBDC) services may be eligible for this initiative.

[Check if your CBDC service is in a very remote area and let your teachers know.](#)

[Applications for indexation waivers](#) are open.

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

## System maintenance

Services Australia will undertake scheduled maintenance of its IT systems this weekend.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm AEST Saturday 17 July to 10am AEST Sunday 18 July.

Providers and services will be unable to enter session reports during this period.



## COVID-19 in Greater Sydney: Local Area Emergency extended

The NSW Government has announced the stay at home direction for Greater Sydney (including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour) will extend to 11.59 pm on Friday 16 July.

Details can be found on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#).

In line with this extension, we have extended the Local Area Emergency (LAE) period for services in affected Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LAE period now runs from 26 June to 16 July for services located in the following LGAs:

City of Sydney, Municipality of Woollahra, City of Randwick, Municipality of Waverley, Bayside Council, Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Municipality of Burwood, Camden Council, Central Coast Council, City of Campbelltown, City of Canada Bay, City of Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland City Council, City of Fairfield, George's River Council, City of Hawkesbury, Hornsby Shire, Municipality of Hunter's Hill, Inner West Council, Ku-ring-gai Council, Lane Cove Council, City of Liverpool, Mosman Council, North Sydney Council, Northern Beaches Council, City of Parramatta, City of Penrith, City of Ryde, Shellharbour City Council, Municipality of Strathfield, Sutherland Shire, The Hills Shire, Wollondilly Shire, City of Willoughby, and Wollongong City Council.

Early childhood education and care services, including vacation care and Outside School Hours Care, can continue to operate in Greater Sydney and across NSW. Under the stay at home rules, accessing child care is considered a reasonable excuse to leave home.

Details are available on the [NSW Department of Education website](#).

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the New South Wales Government and the sector as the situation evolves.

### Absences

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that from this date, all children had 42 absence days available to them.

Learn more about [absences during an emergency](#).

### Gap fee waiver

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.



## If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software rather than emailing the information to the department.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

## Help in an emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#).

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [help in an emergency](#) page.

## Support for families

Families affected by COVID-19 may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## For action

Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.

Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.

Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#).



## Submit session reports by 8 August

You have until 8 August to submit session reports so Services Australia can start balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2020-21 financial year.

Session reports must be accurate and finalised by 8 August because they are essential for balancing (reconciling), which ensures families are paid the correct amount of subsidy.

After this date, the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) will close for the 2020–21 CCS year.

You'll then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 13 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

## Reminder: CCS rates from 12 July

CCS rates will change starting next Monday 12 July.

CCS rates are adjusted each year based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). That means, the CCS family income thresholds, annual cap and hourly rate caps will change.

The new rates will take effect from 12 July 2021, as this is the first CCS fortnight of the new financial year.

Learn about [the CCS rate changes on our website](#).

## Census: avoid compliance action

Under Family Assistance Law, all approved providers and their associated services must complete the National Workforce Census.

The census closed on 27 June 2021 and **to avoid compliance action**, [login and complete the census now](#).

Your login code is in your invitation email from the Social Research Centre.

If you need help, contact the National Workforce Census Helpline on 1800 800 996 (free call) or at [nwc@srcentre.com.au](mailto:nwc@srcentre.com.au).

## Local Jobs Program

The Local Jobs Program can help you get people back into jobs quickly.

Employment facilitators work with early childhood education and care services and other stakeholders to develop employment and training opportunities.



This support includes:

- skills and pre-employment training,
- job opportunities, and
- help to attract and retain employees.

Contact your local employment facilitator to discuss your needs and opportunities in your region.

A list of employment facilitators can be found [on our website](#).

Further information on the Local Jobs Program is available [on our website](#).





## Absences and fees during COVID lockdown

We remind you of the Australian Government support in relation to fee charging and absences during a COVID-19 lockdown.

### Absences

Families can get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year.

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for this new financial year. This means that from yesterday all children have 42 absence days available to them.

Families can access additional absences if we have declared a Local Area Emergency in their service's Local Government Area.

Families can only access additional absences once they have used their 42 allowable absences.

### Fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

## CCS rates from 12 July

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rates are adjusted each year based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). That means, the CCS family income thresholds, annual cap and hourly rate caps will change soon.

The new rates will take effect from 12 July 2021, as this is the first CCS fortnight of the new financial year.

Learn about the [CCS rate changes on our website](#).

## Provider Eligible enrolments ended

On 30 June 2021, all active Provider Eligible Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) enrolments ended in the system.

Services that have children enrolled under this type must create new enrolments under a Complying Written Arrangement or a Provider Eligible Arrangement from 1 July 2021.

See [our website](#) for more information.



## Contacting us

We understand this is a challenging time for providers and services as the COVID-19 situation continues to change.

The CCS Helpdesk is here to help services and providers navigate their way through this difficult time. We are committed to responding to your concerns in a respectful manner and ask that you treat us respectfully in return.

While we understand this has been a stressful period for many businesses and families, please be advised that the CCS Helpdesk will not tolerate abusive phone calls.

## System maintenance

Services Australia will undertake scheduled maintenance of its IT systems this weekend.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm AEST Saturday 3 July to 10am AEST Sunday 4 July.

Providers and services will be unable to enter session reports during this period.



## Alice Springs also in lockdown

Yesterday we provided advice about what the COVID-19 lockdown in the Northern Territory means for child care.

The Northern Territory Government has since announced that Alice Springs will also go into lockdown. Details can be found on the [NT Government's COVID-19 response website](#).

The advice we provided yesterday regarding fee charging and absences also applies to services in Alice Springs. [You can read this advice on our website](#).



## COVID-19 update

We understand this is a challenging time for providers and services as the COVID-19 situation continues to change.

We encourage you to stay up to date with advice and direction provided by your state or territory government.

Click on the links below for information about the Australian Government measures in place to support the early childhood sector experiencing lockdowns and restrictions:

- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [Sydney](#)
- [Western Australia.](#)

We are monitoring events and will work closely with state governments and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Absences

Families can get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. Families can use additional absences if we have declared a Local Area Emergency in their Local Government Area.

### Fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### In Home Care and COVID-19

In Home Care (IHC) services should follow the advice provided to all early childhood education and care services by their state or territory government during a COVID-19 lockdown.

**Where child care remains open, IHC is able to continue for families who need care.**

**Where child care is open for essential workers or vulnerable and disadvantaged children only, IHC can only continue for families who fall into those categories.**

IHC services should consider their usual operating policies and procedures when dealing with illness. Families can use their allowable absences if they do not need care during the lockdown.



## Final day to confirm 2018–19 and 2019–2020 income

Families need to confirm their 2018–19 and 2019–2020 income today (Wednesday 30 June), so that they don't lose their CCS or Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS).

Help families keep CCS or ACCS by reminding them they must confirm their income.

Families must confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return.

More information for providers is [on our balancing webpage](#), including a short video about the process.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

## Provider Eligible Enrolment changes

Changes to Provider Eligible Enrolments come into effect from tomorrow 1 July.

More information and a short video, including when to use Provider Eligible Enrolments, is [available on our website](#).

## Child Care Subsidy rates from 12 July

CCS rates are adjusted at the start of each financial year based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

From 12 July 2021, the CCS family income thresholds, annual cap and hourly rate caps will change.

Learn about the [CCS rate changes on our website](#).

## JobTrainer Fund – free or low fee training courses available across the nation

The JobTrainer Fund is providing free or low fee additional training places for job seekers and young people, including school leavers, to upskill or reskill in areas of skills need.

You can choose from a range of accredited diplomas, certificates or short courses.

Available courses in early childhood education and care include:

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30113), and



- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC50113).

Available courses may differ across the states and territories.

A list of occupations, training courses and providers is available on the [My Skills](#) website.

Further information on JobTrainer is available on the [Your Career](#) website.

## System maintenance this weekend

Services Australia will undertake scheduled maintenance of its IT systems this weekend.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10 pm AEST Saturday 3 July until 10 am AEST Sunday 4 July.

Providers and services will be unable to enter session reports during this period.



## COVID-19 in Queensland: What lockdown means for child care

The Queensland Government has announced a lockdown period for parts of Queensland starting 6pm 29 June 2021.

Details can be found on the [Queensland Government's COVID-19 website](#).

### **During the lockdown schools and child care remain open.**

At this stage there is no change to fee charging and or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Queensland Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Support for services

Providers and services in Queensland may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. More information about [CCCF Special Circumstances](#) is available on our website.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

### For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.



- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Queensland Government's COVID-19 website](#).





## COVID-19 in WA: What lockdown means for child care

The Western Australian Government has announced a minimum 4-day lockdown period for Perth and Peel starting 12:01am, Tuesday 29 June 2021.

Details can be found on the [WA Government's COVID-19 website](#).

### **During the lockdown schools and child care remain open.**

At this stage there is no change to fee charging and or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the WA Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Support for services

Providers and services in Western Australia may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. More information about [CCCF Special Circumstances](#) is available on our website.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

### For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.



- Keep an eye on the [WA Government's COVID-19 website](#).



## Update: LAE includes Wollondilly Shire

As announced yesterday, we've declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **26 June to 9 July 2021** for parts of Sydney. We are writing to clarify that the LAE includes **Wollondilly Shire**.

**Early childhood education and care services, including vacation care, can continue to operate across NSW.** Under the stay at home rules, accessing child care is considered a reasonable excuse to leave home.

For more information on absences, service closures, and Government support, please [visit our website](#). For information on the NSW Government's stay at home direction, visit the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#).



## COVID-19 in NT: What lockdown means for child care

The Northern Territory Government has announced a lockdown period for the Greater Darwin Area. This includes the Darwin, Palmerston and Litchfield Council areas, and Wagait and Belyuen Shires

During the lockdown, child care centres, including vacation care, will open only for the children of essential workers.

Keep a close eye on the [NT Government's COVID-19 response website](#) as the situation evolves.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging and or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NT Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### Support for services

Providers and services in the Northern Territory may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. More information about [CCCF Special Circumstances](#) is available on our website.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

### For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.



- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NT Government's COVID-19 response website](#).



## Local Area Emergency declared for Greater Sydney

On 26 June the NSW Government implemented a stay at home direction for people in Greater Sydney, Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shell Harbour Local Government Areas (LGAs) in response to the evolving COVID-19 situation. Restrictions apply to regional and rural NSW. Details can be found on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#).

In response, we've declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **26 June to 9 July 2021** for services located in the following LGAs in New South Wales:

City of Sydney, Municipality of Woollahra, City of Randwick, Municipality of Waverley, Bayside Council, Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Municipality of Burwood, Camden Council, Central Coast Council, City of Campbelltown, City of Canada Bay, City of Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland City Council, City of Fairfield, George's River Council, City of Hawkesbury, Hornsby Shire, Municipality of Hunter's Hill, Inner West Council, Ku-ring-gai Council, Lane Cove Council, City of Liverpool, Mosman Council, North Sydney Council, Northern Beaches Council, City of Parramatta, City of Penrith, City of Ryde, Shellharbour City Council, Municipality of Strathfield, Sutherland Shire, The Hills Shire, City of Willoughby, and Wollongong City Council.

**Early childhood education and care services, including vacation care, can continue to operate across NSW.** Under the stay at home rules, accessing child care is considered a reasonable excuse to leave home.

### Absences

Children attending a service in the above LGAs will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their available allowable absences.

[Learn more about absences during an emergency.](#)

### Gap fee waiver

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Other Government support

The [Australian Government has declared parts of Sydney a COVID-19 Hotspot](#) until 2 July 2021. Further information can be found on the [Services Australia website](#).

### If you have to close

If you close your service, you must report the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and



- your third-party software provider.

## Help in an emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#).

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [Help in an emergency page](#).

## Support for families

Families affected by COVID-19 may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 response website](#).



## Parts of Sydney on stay-at-home orders

The NSW Government has announced a period of restrictions and stay-at-home orders for parts of Sydney. Details can be found on the [NSW Government's COVID-19 website](#).

**At this stage, child care services and schools remain open. Please keep an eye on the [NSW Department of Education website](#) for updates.**

The [Australian Government has declared parts of Sydney a COVID-19 Hotspot](#) until 2 July 2021. Further information can be found on the [Services Australia website](#).

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the NSW Government and key peak organisations from the sector.

At this stage, there is no further change to fee charging and absent rulings in relation to the restrictions. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families must pay the gap fee.

### For action

Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software.

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software.

Ask your families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.

### Federal Government support

For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

For updates regarding payments and support to individuals affected by COVID-19, visit the [Services Australia website](#).

### Special circumstances grants

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency.

More information about [CCCF Special Circumstances](#) is available on our website.

### Fee waivers

Services can waive gap fees where a health agency has advised or required the service to close as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.





## Absences

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

## Families experiencing temporary financial hardship

[Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing significant financial stress.

## Child care options

Families looking for alternative child care options can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).



## Reminder: you can't transfer approval

We remind providers that approval for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) cannot be transferred to another provider.

A new approval is necessary when ownership changes.

When the identity of the provider changes, whether due to a sale or business restructure (e.g. from a partnership to a company), the former service's CCS approval is cancelled, and the new provider must apply for approval.

If you are planning to take ownership of an existing service or make a change to your legal entity, you need to do the following to ensure families don't lose CCS:

- Apply for the new CCS approval well before the proposed start date of the new ownership.
- Ensure the proposed start date on your CCS application aligns with the start date of the transferred approval issued by your regulatory authority.
- Submit your application, listing all required information.

Read our [Applying for CCS Approval](#) webpage for more information.

For more information about a change of service ownership, email us at [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au).

## Help available to fill jobs

Our Workforce Contact Centre can assist early childhood education and care services fill entry level positions.

The centre can work with you to:

- advertise vacancies on our [Jobs Hub](#) or help you advertise on the [Jobactive jobs board](#)
- connect you with employment services or Apprenticeship Network providers in your area who can pre-screen their caseloads for suitable job seekers
- provide information about government programs, including those that offer wage subsidies, free work experience insurance and funding for essential training, and
- develop workforce solutions such as through the Launch into Work pre-employment program.

To get in touch, email [workforce@dese.gov.au](mailto:workforce@dese.gov.au).



## Have a say on education frameworks

Providers, educators and families can give input to two education frameworks relevant to the sector that are under review.

The frameworks are:

- [Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia](#). This outlines practices that support and promote learning for children, from birth to five years, attending education and care services
- [My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia](#). This outlines practices for children attending before/after school and vacation care.

Supported by all governments, the frameworks are being updated in a project led by Macquarie University, Queensland University of Technology and Edith Cowan University.

You can have a say by completing the appropriate survey below:

- [educators and providers](#)
- [families and communities](#)
- [other key stakeholders](#).

The survey will close early July. For updates on the project, go to the [Approved Learning Frameworks Update website](#) and register your interest.

## Win \$750 voucher for doing census

The National Workforce Census closes this Sunday 27 June.

Services that complete the National Workforce Census can win a \$750 voucher for educational materials or equipment.

Two vouchers will be awarded in each state and territory.

Please see [prize draw terms and conditions](#).

If you haven't already, [you must register and complete the census](#). Your login code is in your invitation email from the Social Research Centre.

Completing the census is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

For more information, contact the National Workforce Census Helpline on 1800 800 996 or email [nwc@srcentre.com.au](mailto:nwc@srcentre.com.au).

[Learn more about National Workforce Census](#).



## Help families keep subsidies from July 2021

Help families keep Child Care Subsidy (CCS) or Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) by reminding them they must confirm their income with Services Australia by Wednesday 30 June.

You can help families keep CCS or ACCS by asking them to confirm their income with Services Australia. CCS or ACCS will be reinstated following confirmation of income with Services Australia but CCS and ACCS will not be backdated.

Families must confirm their income by Wednesday 30 June by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return.

More information for providers is on [our balancing webpage](#), including a short video about the process.

You can also help families by:

- [displaying this poster at your service](#)
- [sharing this fact sheet with families](#).

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

## Two important reporting deadlines fall next week

### Confirming 2018–19 income

Families who missed the first deadline (31 March 2021) must confirm their 2018–19 income by **next Wednesday 30 June**.

**If they don't, they may need to pay back all the CCS and ACCS they received in 2018–19.**

**They will also lose their eligibility for both CCS and ACCS from 12 July 2021** and you will be required to charge full fees.

You will need to direct families to make a new claim if they wish to get a reduced fee again.

Once families who missed the first deadline (31 March 2021) confirm their income, CCS or ACCS will be reinstated but it will not be backdated.

### Confirming 2019–20 income

All families must confirm their 2019–20 income before the first deadline, which falls **next Wednesday 30 June**.



If they don't their CCS and ACCS payments will stop from 12 July 2021. This means families will need to pay full fees when they use child care.

Services Australia can start their CCS and ACCS payments again but only after families have confirmed their income but the subsidies will not be backdated.

This means families may miss out on payments they may have otherwise received.



## Compliance action against 521 services

We have removed more than 500 services from the [Child Care Finder website](#) that have not reported their fees.

Fee reporting is a condition of provider approval to ensure transparency.

With [Child Care Finder](#) a go-to for parents seeking child care in their area, it is vital that families have the right information when choosing a service.

Services in Victoria were not included in the crackdown against 521 services because of the current COVID restrictions.

Most providers are doing the right thing. However, we strongly encourage you to ensure your details are current and that you meet your reporting obligations to avoid future action.

### How to update your details

To update your information and report your current fees, use the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

For help, see the [task card on updating your details in the PEP](#) or contact your third-party software provider.

Your service listing will be updated on the [Child Care Finder website](#) within days.

## Making ACCS easier to administer

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) payments are being streamlined.

ACCS will soon be calculated and paid as one amount, combining both the ACCS and CCS.

From 12 July, the combined payments, including payments due to readjustments before CCS end-of-year balancing, will be made directly to the child care provider.

This will reduce the administrative burden on child care providers when changes are made to family eligibility and entitlement for retrospective periods.

## System maintenance this weekend

Services Australia will undertake scheduled maintenance of its IT systems this weekend.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 8pm AEST Friday 18 June until 6pm AEST Saturday 19 June.

Providers and services will be unable to enter session reports during this period.



## Gap fee waivers extended to end of year

The gap fee waiver provision has been extended nationally from 30 June 2021 until the end of the year.

**Services advised or directed to close by a local authority due to COVID-19 can now waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.**

If your service is advised or directed to close by a Commonwealth, state or territory government authority, you must report the closure and any reopening.

You must state the reason for the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your state or territory regulatory authority, and
- your third-party software provider.

## COVID-19 restrictions

State or territory governments may announce a period of restrictions to quell a local COVID-19 outbreak.

Sometimes, restrictions may affect a child care service's ability to remain open or a family's ability to attend.

At such times, we will monitor the situation and work with local governments and key peak organisations from the sector to consider whether measures of support are needed.

Families seeking advice and information about restrictions in their local area and whether their child care service is affected should visit their local government's COVID-19 information website or contact their centre operator.

Services can access information on [our website](#) or contact the CCS Helpdesk on **1300 667 276** or [ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au)

## Help in an emergency

For information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [Help in an emergency page](#).

## Win \$750 for taking part in census

Services that complete the National Workforce Census will have a chance to win a \$750 voucher for educational materials or equipment.



Two vouchers will be awarded in each state and territory.

Please see [prize draw terms and conditions](#).

If you haven't already, you must [register and complete the census](#). Your login code is in your invitation email from the Social Research Centre.

Completing the census is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

For more information contact the National Workforce Census Helpline on 1800 800 996 or email [nwc@srcentre.com.au](mailto:nwc@srcentre.com.au)

[Learn more about National Workforce Census](#)





## Are you closing or selling your service?

All providers must notify us when they decide to sell, close their service, or change business structure.

If you intend to **permanently close your service, sell it to another provider or change the legal entity of your organisation** (e.g. from a partnership to a company), you must tell us 42 days before the proposed date that this will happen.

For this, use the [Notification of intention of closure, sale or transfer of ownership form](#). Failure to do this could result in the loss of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments for children attending your service.

You must also tell us if you are **temporarily closing your service** for any reason and for any period. To do this, use your child care software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP).

These notifications are additional to those you must give your regulatory authority.

## Entering addresses in the CCSS

From 15 July, you will see some changes to the way addresses are entered into the Child Care Subsidy System or your third-party software:

- addresses will be validated against [Australia Post standards](#), and
- it will be mandatory to enter address information into either the address line 1 or 2 fields.

No action is required of you. Your software provider can help if you have questions.

If you need help or have questions regarding the Provider Entry Point, contact the CCS Helpdesk on **1300 667 276** Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (AEDT) or [send an email](#) anytime.

## Reminder: complete workforce census

We remind services to complete the National Workforce Census as a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

If you haven't already, [you must register and complete the census](#).

Your login code is in your invitation email from the Social Research Centre.

For more information contact the National Workforce Census Helpline on **1800 800 996** or email [nwc@srcentre.com.au](mailto:nwc@srcentre.com.au)

[Learn more about National Workforce Census](#)



## Help with recruiting staff

The Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job program can help you recruit staff for your early childhood education and care service.

The program supports employers who are having difficulties finding suitable employees in their area.

Available vacancies must be for ongoing positions, including traineeships and apprenticeships.

Participants who take up ongoing work may be eligible for help with moving costs.

Contact your local [employment service provider](#) or [disability employment service provider](#) for assistance.

More information is available on the [Relocation Assistance to Take up a Job webpage](#).

## Financial help for very remote teachers

Do you run a Centre Based Day Care Service (CBDC) in very remote Australia?

The Australian Government supports teachers, including early childhood teachers, in very remote areas with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts:

We can:

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

Early childhood teachers at very remote CBDC services may be eligible for this initiative.

[Check if your CBDC service is in a very remote area](#) and let your teachers know.

[Applications for indexation waivers](#) are open.

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



## COVID-19 in Victoria: Local Area Emergency declaration extended

The Local Area Emergency (LAE) declared for all of Victoria following the recent COVID-19 outbreak has been **extended to 30 June 2021**.

The LAE was initially declared for the period Friday 28 May 2021 until Thursday 10 June 2021.

The extension applies to all Victorian local government areas, and will continue to be assessed.

### Absences

Victorian families will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their available allowable absences.

In addition to the standard 42 allowable absences, children attending a Victorian service have an extra 45 days of allowable absences for the 2020–21 financial year. This measure was introduced in response to Victoria's second wave lockdown in 2020.

[Visit our website for information about absences during emergencies.](#)

### Gap fee waiver

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 30 June 2021.

If you close your service, you must report the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.

### Help in an emergency

Some services may be eligible for a Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant. More information, including eligibility criteria, is [available on our website](#).

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [Help in an emergency page](#).

### Support for families

Families affected by COVID-19 may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.



Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government's COVID response website](#).



## Help families not lose subsidies

We're asking providers to play an important role by urging families to confirm their income with Services Australia or risk losing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS).

Confirming income is part of the annual balancing process to ensure families are paid the right amount of CCS and ACCS.

Two important balancing deadlines fall on 30 June 2021.

### Confirming 2018–19 income

Families who missed the first deadline must confirm their 2018–19 income by 30 June 2021.

If they don't, they may need to pay back all the CCS they got in 2018–19.

They will also lose their eligibility for both CCS and ACCS from 12 July 2021.

You will need to direct families to make a new claim if they wish to get a reduced fee again.

### Confirming 2019–20 income

All families must confirm their 2019–20 income before the first deadline on 30 June.

If they don't their CCS and ACCS payments will stop. This means they'll need to pay full fees when they use child care.

Services Australia can start their CCS and ACCS payments again but only after families have confirmed their income.

This means families may miss out on payments they may have otherwise got.

### How you can help

Please tell families to confirm their income for those two financial years by 30 June.

Families can do this by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return.

More information on [balancing is available on our website](#).

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).



## Provider transfers or closures

Have you notified us of your changes?

Providers must notify the department of their intention to stop operating a child care service. This includes closure, sale or transfer of ownership. Complete this form [to notify the department](#).

Failure to do so could result in the loss of Child Care Subsidy payments for children attending your service.

## COVID-19 in Victoria

The Local Area Emergency (LAE) declared for all of Victoria (from 28 May to 10 June 2021) will continue to be assessed should an extension be required.

Visit our website to find out more:

[Local Area Emergency announcement](#)

[COVID-19 and the early childhood and child care sector](#).

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 30 June 2021.

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [Help in an emergency page](#).

Families affected by COVID-19 may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Early Learning Matters Week

Early childhood educators, parents, carers and community leaders around Australia will come together to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early learning from 26 to 30 July.

Visit the [Early Learning Matters Week website](#) to find out how you can take part.

## CCS Helpdesk closed Monday

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed for the public holiday that falls in most states and territories on Monday 14 June.



The CCS Helpdesk will return to its normal operating hours on Tuesday 15 June, which are 9am to 5pm (AEST), Monday to Friday.

The CCS Helpdesk can always be contacted by email at [ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au)



## COVID-19 in Victoria: Local Area Emergency declared

A Local Area Emergency (LAE) has been declared for Victoria following the recent COVID-19 outbreaks. The LAE has been declared for all Victorian Local Government Areas for the period Friday 28 May 2021 until Thursday 10 June 2021 and will continue to be assessed should an extension be required.

### Absences

Victorian families will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their available allowable absences.

In addition to the standard 42 allowable absences, children attending a Victorian service have an extra 45 days of allowable absences for the 2020–21 financial year. This measure was introduced in response to Victoria's second wave lockdown in 2020.

[Visit our website for information about absences during emergencies.](#)

### Gap fee waiver

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 30 June 2021.

If you have to close

If you close your service, you must report the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.

### Help in an emergency

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [Help in an emergency page](#).

### Support for families

Families affected by COVID-19 may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).





## For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government's COVID response website](#).



## 30 June balancing deadlines approach

Two important deadlines fall at the end of this month for families for the balancing of Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

The deadlines, which fall on 30 June, are:

- the second deadline for confirming 2018–19 income, and
- the first deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

If families don't act they risk losing their CCS.

You can help families by:

- [displaying this poster at your service](#)
- [sharing this fact sheet with families.](#)

More information for providers is on [our balancing webpage](#), including a short video about the process.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

## Temporary financial hardship

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) is available to families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to COVID-19.

To access this subsidy, families must be eligible for CCS and have experienced [one of these temporary financial hardship events](#) impacting their ability to pay child care fees.

## Can families find you?

Are your fee and vacancy details up to date on [Child Care Finder](#) so families can find your service?

Reporting of fees and vacancies is a legal requirement under Family Assistance Law.

You can update your details in the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or through your third-party software. For help, see the [task card on updating your details in the PEP](#) or contact your third-party software provider.

More information on when you must notify us of changes is in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Please allow up to 24 hours for [Child Care Finder](#) to reflect any changes.



## Provider Eligible Enrolment changes

Changes to Provider Eligible Enrolments come into effect from 1 July.

[Watch this short video](#) to learn more.

More information, including when to use Provider Eligible Enrolments, is on [our website](#).

## COVID-19 child care resources

With the COVID-19 situation constantly changing, how are you best to stay up to date?

Our website provides information on [current restrictions and their impact on child care](#).

Use the [COVID-19 restriction checker](#) to find out about restrictions in your state or territory.

As well, we advise providers and services to check in regularly to the official websites of state and territory governments and health authorities.



## 1 July changes on Provider Eligible Enrolments

Important changes to Provider Eligible Enrolments come into effect from 1 July.

[Watch this short video](#) to learn what is changing.

For more information about Provider Eligible Enrolments, including when to use them, [visit our website](#).

## COVID-19 Victoria lockdown

Child care will remain open during the seven-day lockdown in Victoria.

Restrictions in Victoria began at 11:59pm on Thursday and end at 11:59pm on Thursday 3 June.

We provide more information [on our website](#).

## Workforce strategy

Public consultation is open on the 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy.

[Read the consultation document](#) and provide feedback through an [online survey](#). The survey closes on Monday 31 May.

## CCS Helpdesk closed on Monday

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed for an ACT public holiday on Monday 31 May.

The CCS Helpdesk will return to its normal operating hours on Tuesday 1 June, which are 9am – 5pm (AEST), Monday to Friday.

The CCS Helpdesk can always be contacted by email at [ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au)



## Victoria seven-day lockdown

The Victorian Government has announced a seven-day circuit breaker lockdown for all of Victoria.

Restrictions start at 11:59pm 27 May and will run until 11:59pm 3 June. During this time there are five reasons to leave your home, including for authorised work or permitted education.

Child care will remain open. Schools will close except for the children of authorised workers and vulnerable children.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging and or absence rulings in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. The department is monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Victorian Government and key peak organisations from the sector to consider measures of support if required.

For detailed information on how the lockdown affects your service, visit the [Victorian Government's COVID response website](#).

### For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#)
- Update your contact details (particularly email addresses) in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software
- Ask your families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

All children attending a Victorian service have an extra 45 days of allowable absences for the 2020–21 financial year. This measure was introduced in response to Victoria's second wave lockdown in 2020.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) (temporary financial hardship) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).



## Changes to Provider Eligible Enrolments from 1 July



### Watch the video: do you need to act?

Important changes to Provider Eligible Enrolments come into effect from 1 July.

In rare cases, providers may be able to receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) payments on behalf of a child. This occurs when a child is at risk, but their parent or carer is not eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

To do this, you must enrol the child under a Provider Eligible Enrolment.

[Watch this short video](#) to learn what is changing on 1 July.

For more information about Provider Eligible Enrolments, including when to use one, [visit our website](#).

### Comment on workforce strategy

Public consultation is open on the 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy.

ACECQA is coordinating the development of the strategy on behalf of all governments.

We encourage anyone working in early childhood to:

- read the [consultation document](#), and
- provide feedback through an [online survey](#).



The survey closes on Monday (31 May).

Learn more about the strategy on [ACECQA's website](#).

## Parents' say on child care

We're inviting parents to have a say on child care in a national survey.

On Monday (24 May), we invited 15,800 randomly selected parents to be part of the survey. We'll send those parents a link to the online survey on Friday (28 May) via text message and email.

The survey closes 10am on Tuesday 15 June.

Please encourage parents at your service who have been invited to share their views.

The survey will help us understand how to better support families to access quality and affordable care so they can work, study or volunteer.

## Future of Work Program opens

The Future of Work Program aims to build a regional workforce for the future.

The program is available to students enrolled or considering enrolling in a short course who live in:

- Bowen Basin and Mackay, Queensland
- Roxby Downs and Upper Spencer Gulf, South Australia
- The Pilbara and Goldfields, Western Australia
- Hunter Region, New South Wales.

Eligible students will have their student contribution fee covered. They may also receive help with other expenses.

Applications close 25 June 2021.

If you have questions about the program, email [applications@regionalfutureofwork.com](mailto:applications@regionalfutureofwork.com)

[Find short courses on Course Seeker](#)

[Discover more about Future of Work program](#)

## COVID-19 update: Melbourne

New COVID-19 cases have prompted additional [COVIDSafe measures](#) in metropolitan Melbourne. We encourage providers and services to stay up to date with the situation.

Helpful information can be found on:

- the [Victorian Government website](#), and



- Healthdirect Australia's [COVID-19 Restriction Checker](#).





## Have your say on workforce strategy

Public consultation is open on the 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy (2021–30).

ACECQA is coordinating the development of the strategy on behalf of all governments.

We encourage anyone working in early childhood to:

- read the [consultation document](#), and
- provide feedback through an [online survey](#).

Your feedback is essential to support the development of this strategy.

The survey closes 31 May 2021.

Learn more about the strategy on [ACECQA's website](#).

## Update your Child Care Finder details

Are your fee and vacancy details up to date on [Child Care Finder](#) to help families find your service?

Reporting of fees and vacancies is a legal requirement under Family Assistance Law.

You can update your details in the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or through your third-party software. For help, see the [task card on updating your details in the PEP](#) or contact your third-party software provider.

More information about when you need to notify us of changes is available in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Please allow up to 24 hours for [Child Care Finder](#) to reflect changes.

## Better understand balancing

We encourage providers and services to remind families about the next deadline for balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Two important deadlines fall on 30 June 2021:

- the second deadline for confirming 2018–19 income, and
- the first deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

We have new resources you can share with families:



- [Display this poster at your service](#)
- [Share this fact sheet with families.](#)

More information for providers is on our [balancing webpage](#), including a [short video](#) to help you understand the process.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

## Future of Work Program opens

The Future of Work Program aims to build a regional workforce for the future.

The program is available to students enrolled or considering enrolling in a short course who live in:

- Bowen Basin and Mackay, Queensland
- Roxby Downs and Upper Spencer Gulf, South Australia
- The Pilbara and Goldfields, Western Australia
- Hunter Region, New South Wales.

Eligible students will have their student contribution fee covered. They may also receive help with other expenses.

Applications close 25 June 2021.

If you have questions about the program, email [applications@regionalfutureofwork.com](mailto:applications@regionalfutureofwork.com).

[Find short courses on Course Seeker.](#)

[Discover more about Future of Work program.](#)

## Free and low-fee training available

The JobTrainer Fund is providing free or low-fee additional training places for job seekers and young people, including school leavers, to upskill or reskill in areas of need.

You can choose from a range of accredited diplomas, certificates or short courses.

Available courses in early childhood education and care include:

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30113)
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC50113).

Available courses may differ across states and territories.

A list of occupations, training courses and providers is available on the [My Skills](#) website.

[Learn more about JobTrainer on Your Career website.](#)



## Budget measures for sector explained

The Australian Government announced new measures in support of the early childhood education and care sector in last night's Federal Budget.

### Preschool Reform Funding Agreement

A new \$2 billion, four-year national reform commitment will strengthen the delivery of preschool and better prepare children to start school, through to the end of 2025.

Under the agreement, the Australian Government will continue to provide a per child contribution to states and territories. In 2022, this will be around \$1340.

The commitment locks in ongoing Australian Government funding beyond 2025, with reforms to be agreed with all states and territories to lift preschool attendance and outcomes.

The funding supports 15 hours of preschool a week – 600 hours a year – for all children in the year before they start school.

[Learn more about Preschool Reform Funding Agreement](#)

### Enhanced Child Care Subsidy

Families will receive more support from the Australian Government with the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) set to be increased for families with multiple children under the age of 6, and the annual cap removed, from July 2022.

From July 2022, we'll increase CCS for families who earn under \$353,680 (2020–21) and have more than one child aged under 6 in care.

We'll increase their subsidy by 30% (capped at 95%) for their second child and subsequent children under 6.

Families earning more than \$189,390 (2020–21) have an annual subsidy cap of \$10,560 per child. From July 2022, we're removing this cap.

These measures will lower out-of-pocket costs for more than 250,000 families in 2022–23, with the Australian Government investing an additional \$1.7 billion through CCS.

[Learn more about enhanced CCS](#)

### Reducing red tape in child care

The Australian Government will provide \$12.6 million over four years to reduce red tape in the child care sector. We'll do this through:



- a centralised child care service website
- improved compliance operations, and
- smoothing the process for Additional Child Care Subsidy.

[Learn more about budget measure on red tape](#)

## More information

- [Learn more about 2021–22 budget for DESE](#)
- [Read Education Minister’s budget media release](#)
- [Read Treasurer’s full budget speech](#)



## Have your say on workforce strategy

ACECQA, on behalf of all governments, is coordinating the development of the ten-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy (2021–2030), including consultation.

Public consultation on the strategy is open. We encourage anyone working in early childhood to:

- read the [consultation document](#), and
- provide feedback through an [online survey](#).

Your feedback is essential to support the development of this strategy.

The survey closes 31 May 2021.

[Learn more about the strategy on ACECQA's website.](#)

## It's National Workforce Census reference week

This week is the Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census reference week (10 to 16 May 2021).

That means that this week you should note child attendance and details of your workforce.

You can start entering data for the census from 17 May 2021.

CCS approved services must complete the census under Family Assistance Law.

If you haven't already, [please register](#).

Your login code is in your invitation email from the Social Research Centre.

If you need help or have questions, contact the National Workforce Census Helpline on 1800 800 996 (free call) or email [nwc@srcentre.com.au](mailto:nwc@srcentre.com.au).

[Learn more about National Workforce Census on our website.](#)

## Free bushfire recovery webinar

Be You will hold a free webinar for educators about bushfire recovery from 3:30pm to 4:30pm (AEDT) on Thursday, 20 May.

The webinar will cover:

- factors that influence recovery following a bushfire
- methods which can support a learning community as part of bushfire recovery, and



- an educator's role in supporting children and young people.

[Register for the webinar on Be You's website.](#)

Please share this resource with educators at your service.

[Learn more about Be You's Bushfire Response Program on their website.](#)



## Govt announces enhanced CCS

The [Australian Government has announced](#) proposed enhancements to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), lowering out-of-pocket costs for more than 250,000 families, ahead of next week's 2021–22 Federal Budget.

Families will receive more support from the Australian Government from July 2022 under the proposed changes to CCS. The changes include:

- increasing CCS for families with more than one child in care under the age of 6, and
- removing the annual cap.

For more details, [visit our website](#).

## Families must give income estimate

Services Australia uses a family's income estimate to work out how much Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Subsidy a family gets. It's important families provide an accurate family income estimate for 2021–22.

Services Australia sends letters to families to remind them to provide a new estimate for the next financial year.

If families don't give a new estimate, Services Australia will estimate their income using information from the current year. However, this amount may not be accurate. If it's too low, families may get a debt. If it's too high, families may receive less than they're entitled.

Families can give a new estimate using:

- their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#), or
- their [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

We encourage you to share this information with your families.

More information is available on the [Services Australia website](#).

## Reconciliation awards open

The [Narragunnawali Awards](#) is the first national awards program in Australia to recognise and celebrate educational environments implementing outstanding reconciliation initiatives.

We encourage services demonstrating excellence to reconciliation in education to [apply](#).

Applications close Friday 14 May.



## Compliance survey closes tomorrow

We want your views on our existing [compliance resources](#), and future resources. If you would like to help shape the design and delivery of compliance resources, [complete this short ten question survey](#).

The survey closes tomorrow.





## FEDERAL BUDGET: Enhancements to CCS from July 2022

As part of the 2021–22 Federal Budget, the [Australian Government announced](#) enhancements to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), lowering out-of-pocket costs for more than 250,000 families.

From July 2022, families will receive more support from the Australian Government with the CCS to be increased for families with multiple children under the age of 6.

The changes include:

- increasing CCS for families with more than one child in care under the age of 6, and
- removing the annual cap.

[For more details, visit our website.](#)



## Video: 30 June balancing deadline



We are encouraging providers and services to remind families about the next deadline for balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Two important deadlines fall on 30 June 2021:

- the second deadline for confirming 2018–19 income, and
- the first deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

We've developed [a short video](#) to explain:

- balancing
- the two deadlines on 30 June 2021
- the consequences if families miss deadlines, and
- how you can help families not lose CCS.

We have more information for providers on our [balancing webpage](#). If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

## Have your say on compliance

We want your views on our existing [compliance resources](#), and future resources. If you would like to help shape the design and delivery of compliance resources, [complete this short ten question survey](#). The survey closes 6 May.



## CCS Helpdesk closed Monday

The Child Care Subsidy Helpdesk will be closed on Monday (26 April) because of the Anzac Day public holiday in the ACT. The Helpdesk will reopen at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday (27 April).

You can still send questions through our [online enquiry form](#). You can also find more information on [our website](#).



## Video: Help families not lose CCS



## Next balancing deadline 30 June

We are encouraging providers and services to remind families about the next deadline for balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

There are two important deadlines that fall on 30 June 2021:

- the second deadline for confirming 2018–19 income, and
- the first deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

### Confirming 2018–19 income

Most families confirmed their 2018–19 income before the first deadline on 31 March 2021. Any families who still haven't confirmed their 2018–19 income must do so by the second deadline on 30 June 2021. If they don't, they may need to pay back all the CCS they got in 2018–19.

### Confirming 2019–20 income

Many families have confirmed their 2019–20 income already. If they haven't, they must do so by the first deadline on 30 June 2021. If they don't, their CCS will stop and they'll need to pay full fees for child care.

### How do families confirm their income?

You can inform families they confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or



- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can complete an [Advise non-lodgement of tax return](#) using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or through the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#). They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge.

If a parent separates from their partner/s, Services Australia will also need their ex-partner's income. If a parent is concerned that their ex-partner/s won't lodge their tax return by the deadline they should call the [Families line](#).

## Video explainer

As there are two deadlines occurring at the same time, we've developed a [short video to explain](#):

- balancing
- the two deadlines that fall on 30 June 2021
- the serious consequences if families miss these deadlines, and
- what you can do to help families not lose CCS.

## More information

We've updated our [balancing web page](#) to provide more information. If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

Reminder: what to do if families missed first deadline

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments will have stopped for any families who missed the first deadline on 31 March 2021 to confirm 2018–19 income.

You must charge these families full fees.

Services Australia can start a family's CCS again after they have confirmed their income. But they can only restart payments from the first day of the next CCS fortnight, after income has been confirmed.

Importantly, if there was a gap between the CCS stopping and starting again, payments won't be backdated, and you must charge full fees for this period.

Parents can find more information about this on the [Services Australia website](#).

## Have your say on compliance

We want your views on our existing [compliance resources](#), and future resources. If you would like to help shape the design and delivery of compliance resources, please [complete this short ten question survey](#). The survey closes 6 May.



## WA cyclone: Local Area Emergency

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period 12 April 2021 to 26 April 2021 inclusive for all child care services located in areas affected by the recent tropical cyclone on the mid-west coast of Western Australia.

The LAE includes these towns: Northampton, Kalbarri, Denham, Coorow, Carnamah, Moora, Paynes Find, Jurien Bay, Lancelin, Wongan Hills and Dalwallinu.

It also includes areas south of Carnarvon to Lancelin, namely the shires of Shark Bay, Chapman Valley, Morawa, Greater Geraldton, Mingenew, Three Springs, Perenjori and Irwin.

**Families attending services in these areas will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their allowance of 42 absences.**

[Visit our website for information about absences during emergencies.](#)

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency.

[Visit our website for details and to apply.](#)

### If you close

If you close your service, you must report the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.

### Help in an emergency

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency, visit our [Help in an emergency](#) page.

### Support for families

Families affected by the cyclone may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

A range of payments and services is available for individuals recovering from a major disaster. More information on [emergency payments](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

### For action



- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Western Australian Government's emergency site](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## Help available in an emergency

The Australian Government provides support to providers, services and families in the event of a local emergency.

[Learn more about preparing for an emergency, what help is available when one occurs, and the support available to help you recover.](#)

## Have a say on compliance resources

We are seeking your views on our existing [compliance resources](#), and future resources.

If you would like to help shape the design and delivery of compliance resources, please [complete this short ten question survey](#).

The survey closes 6 May.

## Free mental health training

We are working with [Everymind](#) to help promote the mental health of small business owners across Australia.

[Ahead for Business](#) is a program designed specifically with the mental health of small business owners in mind, and Everymind has just launched free Business Wellbeing training.

The online training helps small business owners develop knowledge and skills around the areas of mental health, stigma, effective communication, and promoting mental health in your business.

The four modules take about 10 to 15 minutes each to complete and can be done at any time.

All participants are asked to complete a short pre-training and post-training survey, which take about five to 10 minutes each.

The program is available until 30 May.

[Register for Business Wellbeing training](#)





## Have your say on compliance

We are seeking your views on our existing [compliance resources](#), as well as future resources.

If you would like to help shape the design and delivery of compliance resources, please [complete our short ten question survey](#).

Your views are important and we encourage you to complete the survey by **6 May 2021**.

## Compliance videos

Don't forget we have a series of short videos to help you understand your obligations under Family Assistance Law.

We cover:

- what you need to know when a child or educator is away
- the rules for Family Day Care educators who care for relatives, and
- which people in your organisation need to remain fit and proper.

[Go to the videos on our website](#)

## Support for flood affected areas

### CCCF Special Circumstances

The Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances grant helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as flooding.

[Learn more about CCCF Special Circumstances](#)

### ACCS (temporary financial hardship)

Families who are eligible for CCS may get extra help if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Families can find more information about [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) on the Services Australia website.

### Other Government payments

The Australian Government provides a range of payments and services for individuals recovering from a major disaster. More information on [emergency payments](#) is available on the Services Australia website.



## Looking after mental health

Emergencies and disasters can have a profound impact on mental health. Knowing how to look after yourself, and others, is important for recovery.

We have a range of [mental health resources](#) you may find helpful after an emergency on our website.

## Wage help for trainees

Early childhood education and care services who take on new trainees may be eligible for an Australian Government subsidy.

Eligible services can receive a subsidy of 50% of a trainee's gross wages. The subsidy will pay up to \$7,000 per quarter for wages paid in the 12-month period from the date of commencement.

You may be eligible if you engage a new trainee between 5 October 2020 and 30 September 2021 who:

- is undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification, including Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care, and
- has a training contract formally approved by the state training authority.

Exclusions and Existing Worker eligibility will apply.

[Learn about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements](#)



## NSW, Queensland floods

### New South Wales

We declared a Local Area Emergency last week for the period of 22 March to 4 April 2021 for all child care services in 34 local government areas in New South Wales.

**We have now expanded the LAE to all child care services in 60 local government areas in New South Wales.**

[Learn more about the LAE in NSW and affected areas](#)

### Queensland

We also declared a Local Area Emergency for the period of 22 March to 4 April 2021 for all child care services in seven local government areas in Queensland.

[Learn more about the LAE in Queensland](#)

## Update: QLD COVID-19 lockdown

The Queensland Government announced a three-day period of restrictions for Greater Brisbane starting at 5pm on Monday, 29 March and with it expected to end at 5pm tomorrow (Thursday, 1 April).

[Learn what this means for services](#)

## Final day to confirm 2018–19 income

Today (Wednesday, 31 March) is the final day for families to confirm their 2018–19 income with Services Australia.

**Families who haven't confirmed their 2018–19 income will lose their Child Care Subsidy (CCS) from 5 April.**

If families confirm their income after 5 April, Services Australia can start their CCS again.

Payments will restart the following CCS Monday, after their income is confirmed. If there was a gap between their CCS stopping and this date, they won't get CCS for that time.

To confirm their 2018–19 income for the purposes of balancing, families need to:

- lodge their tax return, or
- tell Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can do this using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).



We have more [information for providers on our website](#).

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

## Eased activity test ends Sunday

Last year, the Australian Government [eased the activity test](#) for families whose employment was affected by COVID-19.

This measure gives families access to extra Child Care Subsidy (CCS) hours if their recognised activity level decreases.

These extra hours are a temporary COVID-19 measure and will end on 4 April 2021.

You may notice a change to the amount of CCS you receive on behalf of families from 5 April.

Please ask families to ensure their [activity test details](#) are up to date so they receive the right amount of CCS.

More information for families is available on the [Services Australia website](#).

## Financial help for very remote teachers

Do you run a Centre Based Day Care Service in very remote Australia?

The Australian Government supports teachers, including early childhood teachers, in very remote areas with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts.

We provide two types of assistance. We can:

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

**Early childhood teachers at very remote Centre Based Day Care (CBDC) services may be eligible for this initiative.**

[Check if your CBDC service is in a very remote area](#) and let your teachers know.

[Applications for indexation waivers](#) are open.

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



## NSW flood emergency zones expanded

Last week, we declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period 22 March to 4 April 2021 for all child care services in these 34 local government areas in New South Wales because of the floods:

Armidale, Bellingen, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury Bankstown, Central Coast, Cessnock, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Cumberland, Dungog Shire, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Inner West, Kempsey, Ku-ring-gai, Lake Macquarie, Liverpool, Maitland, Mid-Coast, Nambucca, Newcastle, Northern Beaches, Parramatta, Penrith, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Port Stephens, Sutherland, Tenterfield, The Hills, and Wollondilly.

**We have now expanded the LAE to include these 26 local government areas:**

Ballina, Bathurst, Bega Valley, Brewarrina, Byron, Cabonne, Cobar, Eurobodalla, Glen Innes Severn, Gunnedah, Gwydir, Inverell, Kyogle, Lismore, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Oberon, Orange, Richmond Valley, Shoalhaven, Singleton, Tweed, Walcha, Walgett, and Wingecarribee.

Families attending services in these areas will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their allowance of 42 absences.

[Visit our website for information about absences during emergencies.](#)

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency.

[Visit our website for details and to apply.](#)

### If you have to close

If you close your service, you must report the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.

### Help in an emergency

For more information about support before, during and after an emergency visit our [help in an emergency](#) page.

### Support for families

Families affected by the current floods may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.



A range of payments and services is available for individuals recovering from a major disaster. More information on [emergency payments](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

Also, the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment is available to eligible Australians affected by the storms and floods. Visit the [Disaster Assist website](#) for details.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Have you taken this action?

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on [the NSW Government's emergency site](#) and [NSW State Emergency Service site](#) for up-to-date emergency information in your region.



## Update: Queensland lockdown

Due to a local outbreak of COVID-19, the Queensland Government has announced a three-day period of restrictions for the Greater Brisbane area starting at 5 pm 29 March.

**During this time, schools and child care centres remain open for vulnerable children and the children of essential workers.**

At this stage there is no change to fee charging and or allowable absences. Only services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 30 June 2021.

The department is monitoring the situation closely and should the situation change, we'll contact you with additional information and advice.

### Actions to take

- Update your vacancy details in [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software.
- Update your contact details (particularly email addresses) in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Queensland Government's COVID-19 site](#) for up-to-date information in your region.

### Support for families

Families can get Child Care Subsidy when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

Families looking for alternative child care options can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

Nationally, the activity test has been eased until 4 April 2021 for Australian families whose employment has been affected by COVID-19. Affected families can access up to 100 hours of subsidised child care, per child, per fortnight.

### Useful links

[Queensland Government COVID-19 response website](#)

[Queensland Department of Health](#)

[Queensland Department of Education](#)



## Wednesday deadline approaches for families

Families have until Wednesday (31 March) to confirm their 2018–19 income with Services Australia or lose their Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

To confirm their 2018–19 income for the purposes of balancing, families need to:

- lodge their tax return, or
- tell Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can do this using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

Please note, families provide an income estimate to Services Australia before the start of each financial year.

They can also update their estimate during the year if their circumstances change.

This is a separate process to balancing, where families must **confirm their income after the end of a financial year**.

We have more [information for providers on our website](#).

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).





## QLD floods: Local Area Emergency

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period 22 March to 4 April 2021 for all child care services in seven local government areas:

- Gold Coast
- Goondiwindi
- Lockyer Valley
- Logan
- Qualpie
- Scenic Rim
- Southern Downs.

In these areas, you may be required to close by local authorities, or families cannot travel.

Families attending services in these areas will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their allowance of 42 absences.

[Visit our website for more information about absences during emergencies.](#)

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. [Visit our website for details about the grant opportunity and to apply.](#)

### If you have to close

If you close your service, you must report the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.

### Support for services

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency, visit our [Help in an emergency](#) page.

### Support for families

Families affected by the current floods may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.



A range of payments and services is available for individuals recovering from a major disaster. More information on [emergency payments](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

Also, the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment is available to eligible Australians affected by the storms and floods. Visit the [Disaster Assist website for details](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Action for you

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this through the [Provider Entry Point](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask your families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Queensland Government's emergency site](#) and [Queensland State Emergency Service site](#) for up-to-date emergency information in your region.



## NSW floods: Local Area Emergency

We have declared a Local Area Emergency for child care services in 34 local government areas in New South Wales.

[Learn more about the NSW Local Area Emergency](#)

## Final week to confirm 2018–19 income

Families have one more week – until 31 March – to confirm their 2018–19 income with Services Australia or lose their Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

To confirm their 2018–19 income for the purposes of balancing, families need to:

- lodge their tax return, or
- tell Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can do this using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

Please note, families provide an income estimate to Services Australia before the start of each financial year.

They can also update their estimate during the year if their circumstances change.

This is a separate process to balancing, where families must confirm their income after the end of a financial year.

There's [more information for providers on our website](#). Here you'll find:

- [short video](#) that explains balancing
- [fact sheet](#) to share with families, and
- [poster](#) to display at your service.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

## Eased activity test ends 4 April

Last year, the Australian Government [eased the activity test](#) for families whose employment was affected by COVID-19.

This measure currently gives families access to extra Child Care Subsidy (CCS) hours if their recognised activity level decreases.

These extra hours are a temporary COVID-19 measure and will end on 4 April 2021.

You may notice a change to the amount of CCS you receive on behalf of families from 5 April.



Please ask your families to ensure their [activity test details](#) are up to date so they receive the right amount of CCS.

More information for families is available on the [Services Australia website](#).

## Have your say on quality standards

The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a national approach to regulating the quality of early childhood education and care services across Australia. It guides your work supporting children's development and learning.

Regular reviews of the NQF ensure the regulatory system supported by all Australian governments is current.

Feedback provided during the first round of 2019 NQF Review consultations has been used to develop a [Consultation Regulation Impact Statement](#) (CRIS).

The CRIS outlines options for change. It explores the following issues:

- safety, health, and wellbeing
- family day care
- outside school hours care
- workforce
- understanding of quality ratings by families
- changes in fees within the NQF system
- oversight and governance of services and providers, and
- proposed changes to the NQF arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

**You can have your say on the CRIS by completing a [survey](#) or sending a [written submission](#).**

Submissions close 30 April 2021.

[Learn more about the NQF Review](#)

## Did you miss bushfire webinar?

[Be You](#) recently held a webinar for educators on understanding trauma responses after a bushfire.

The [webinar is now available online](#). There's also a summary of attendee questions and answers.

The next Be You webinar is scheduled for early May.

[Learn more about Be You's Bushfire Response Program](#)



## Learn about Let's Count program

The Smith Family's Let's Count program is an early mathematics program for children aged 3 to 5.

The program supports early childhood educators, in partnership with parents, to promote positive numeracy experiences for young children by noticing, exploring and talking about numeric concepts using everyday activities.

Let's Count includes:

- a professional development program for educators, and
- an interactive Facebook Messenger bot to weave learning activities into everyday life.

The program aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework and meets National Quality Standard requirements.

[Explore the Let's Count program](#)



## Floods: Local Area Emergency declared

**We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period of 22 March 2021 to 4 April 2021 for all child care services in these 34 local government areas in New South Wales:**

Armidale, Bellingen, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury Bankstown, Central Coast, Cessnock, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Cumberland, Dungog Shire, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Inner West, Kempsey, Ku-ring-gai, Lake Macquarie, Liverpool, Maitland, Mid-Coast, Nambucca, Newcastle, Northern Beaches, Parramatta, Penrith, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Port Stephens, Sutherland, Tenterfield, The Hills, and Wollondilly.

In these areas, you may be required to close by local authorities, or families cannot travel.

Families attending services in these areas will have access to additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their allowance of 42 absences.

[Visit our website for more information about absences during times of emergency.](#)

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency.

[Visit our website for details about this grant and how to apply.](#)

### If you have to close

If you close your service, you must report the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.

### Support for providers and services

For more information about help available before, during and after an emergency visit our [Help in an emergency](#) page.

### Support for families

Families affected by the floods may be eligible to receive additional support with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

A range of payments and services is available for individuals recovering from a major disaster. More information on [emergency payments](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

Additionally, the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment is available to eligible Australians adversely affected by the storms and floods. Visit the [Disaster Assist website for details](#).



Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Action for you

- Update your vacancy details in [Child Care Finder](#)
- Update your contact details (particularly email addresses) in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government's emergency site](#) and [NSW State Emergency Service site](#) for up-to-date emergency information in your region.



## Be You Virtual Conference

### Wellbeing: You, Me, Us

Be You is holding a free virtual conference this month for early childhood educators on how learning communities can work together to support each other's mental health.

The conference will cover:

- recognising, reflecting on and responding to grief and loss in a school community
- acknowledging and encouraging diversity in your learning community
- inclusive practices for mentally healthy communities, and more.

### When is the conference?

The conference will take place online over two days:

- 11:00am – 2:00pm AEDT Wednesday 24 March
- 2:00pm – 5:00pm AEDT Thursday 25 March.

### How to attend

1. [Register to attend](#) to receive a conference link.
2. Browse the Virtual Conference program and choose your sessions. You don't have to attend the whole conference – pick and choose sessions.
3. Can't make a session? When you register, recordings are shared with you post-event.

For more information, visit the [BeYou – Wellbeing: You, Me, Us webpage](#).





## Balancing deadline looms for families

Two weeks remain for families to confirm their 2018–19 income.

**If they don't confirm by 31 March as part of the balancing process, they'll lose their Child Care Subsidy.**

To confirm their income, families need to:

- lodge their tax return, or
- tell Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can do this using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

There's more [information for providers on our website](#). Here you'll find:

- [short video](#) that explains balancing
- [fact sheet](#) to share with families, and
- [poster](#) to display at your service.

If families have questions, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

## Do you operate vacation care?

Time is running out for vacation care services to register for the Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census.

If you haven't already, [you must register for the census](#).

**Registration for vacation care only services closes on 26 March 2021.**

Registration for all other services closes on 23 April 2021.

Your login code is in your invitation email from the Social Research Centre.

Completing the census is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

If you need help or have questions, contact the National Workforce Census Helpline on 1800 800 996 (free call) or email [nwc@srcentre.com.au](mailto:nwc@srcentre.com.au).

[Learn more about National Workforce Census](#)

## Wage help for trainees

Early childhood education and care services who take on new trainees may be eligible for an Australian Government subsidy.



Eligible services can receive a subsidy of 50% of a trainee's gross wages. The subsidy will pay up to \$7,000 per quarter for wages paid in the 12-month period from the date of commencement.

You may be eligible if you engage a new trainee between 5 October 2020 and 30 September 2021 who:

- is undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification, including Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care, and
- has a training contract formally approved by the state training authority.

Exclusions and Existing Worker eligibility will apply.

[Learn about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements](#)

## Extension for gap fee waiving

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 30 June 2021, following an extension from the Australian Government.

## Health advice on gastro outbreaks

While alcohol-based hand sanitisers can prevent transmission of COVID-19, they are not effective on many of the viruses that cause gastro (viral gastroenteritis).

In light of recent outbreaks experienced by some services, we offer these reminders:

- Ensure staff and children wash hands regularly with soap and running water for 20 seconds each time.
- In the case of vomiting, children must remain at home for 24–48 hours after their symptoms have stopped, depending on their symptoms. In the case of diarrhoea, children must remain at home for at least 24 hours after their symptoms have stopped. They should also see a GP for advice and testing if symptoms are severe or persist.
- The [Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services guide](#) provides guidance on cleaning and sanitising child care facilities.

You can find more detailed health advice on your local government health department website.



## Breaking: gap fee waiver extended

The gap fee waiver provision has been extended nationally from 31 January 2021 until 30 June 2021.

**Services directed to close by a local authority due to COVID-19 can now waive gap fees until 30 June 2021.**

If your service is directed to close by a Commonwealth, state or territory government authority, you must report the closure and any reopening.

You must state the reason for the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your state or territory regulatory authority, and
- your third-party software provider.

## COVID-19 restrictions

State or territory governments may announce a period of restrictions to quell a local COVID-19 outbreak.

In some cases, restrictions may affect a child care service's ability to remain open or a family's ability to attend.

At such times, we will monitor the situation and work with local governments and key peak organisations from the sector to consider whether measures of support are needed.

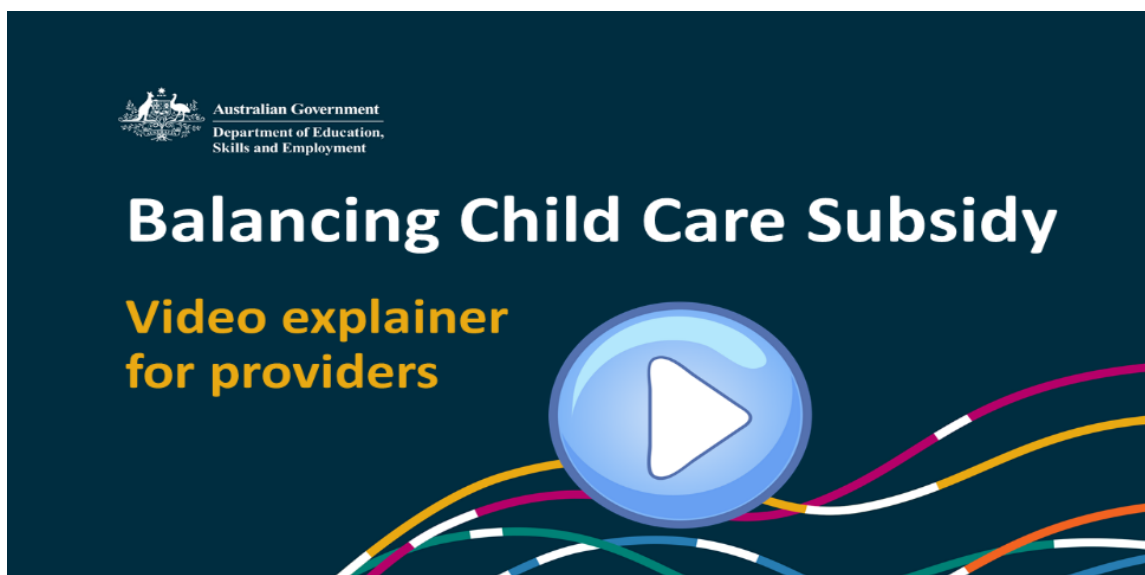
Families seeking advice and information about restrictions in their local area and whether their child care service is affected should visit their local government's COVID-19 information website, or contact their centre operator.

Services can access information [on our website](#) or contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or [ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au).



## New Video: Balancing Child Care Subsidy Explained

What balancing CCS means for you



### What to tell families to get correct CCS

We are encouraging providers and services to alert families that they need to report their incomes to Services Australia for the “balancing” of Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Families must confirm their income after the end of each financial year to ensure they are paid the right amount of CCS.

This “balancing” process is underway for two financial years – the 2018–19 financial year and the 2019–20 financial year.

Last year, the first deadline for the 2018-2019 financial year was extended because of COVID-19.

**So, this is the first time we’ll reach a deadline. As well, two deadlines fall at the same time.**

**To note, the first deadline to report income for the 2018-19 financial year is approaching – 31 March this year.**

Given some families may be unfamiliar with the process, we have produced [this short video](#) to explain:

- what is balancing
- the deadlines for families to report income



- what balancing means for providers (e.g. how you may need to adjust the gap fee if a family's CCS changes after balancing).

## Other resources on balancing

- This [page on our early childhood website](#) details each deadline and the consequences if families miss them.
- [Here's a poster you can print to display at your service.](#)
- If you have further questions direct them to [Services Australia](#).



## Reminder on child absences

We remind you that Child Care Subsidy (CCS) isn't paid until a child physically attends a session of care. It also isn't paid after their last day of physical attendance.

This means you won't receive any CCS if you submit an absence before a child's first, or after their last, physical attendance.

There are exceptions in limited circumstances. You may receive CCS for absences up to 7 days before a child's first, or after a child's last, physical attendance if any of the following apply:

- any of the [additional absence reasons](#)
- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill (no medical certificate required if the child has not used 42 absence days)
- the service has changed ownership
- the usual service is closed and the child is attending a different service under the same provider
- a family tragedy has occurred, or
- the enrolment ceased incorrectly.

If you record absences after a child's last physical attendance and the enrolment subsequently ends, you or the family may incur a debt.

Please ensure families know how to end their enrolment if they wish. This ensures families can retain their absences.

[Learn more about reporting absences in the Child Care Provider Handbook](#)

## Be You Virtual Conference

### Wellbeing: You, Me, Us

Be You is holding a free virtual conference for early childhood educators on how learning communities can work together to support each other's mental health.

The conference will cover:

- recognising, reflecting on and responding to grief and loss in a school community
- acknowledging and encouraging diversity in your learning community
- inclusive practices for mentally healthy communities, and much more.



## When is it?

The conference will take place online over two days:

- 11am to 2pm AEDT Wednesday 24 March
- 2pm to 5pm AEDT Thursday 25 March.

## How to attend

1. [Register to attend](#) to receive conference link.
2. Browse the Virtual Conference program and choose your sessions. You don't have to attend the whole conference – pick and choose the sessions you need.
3. Can't make a session? When you register, recordings are shared with you post-event.

For more information, visit the [BeYou – Wellbeing: You, Me, Us webpage](#).



## Help in an emergency

Do you know what support is available if you're affected by a local emergency?

We've produced three short videos on:

- preparing for an emergency
- what to do during an emergency, and
- recovering after one strikes.

[Go to videos on our website](#)

## Service closures

We remind you that if your service closes you must report the closure and any reopening.

You must state the reason for the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.

## National Workforce Census

All approved providers have been invited to register for the Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census.

If you haven't already, [you must register for the census](#).

Your login code was provided in the invitation emailed from the Social Research Centre.

Registrations close:

- vacation care services, 26 March 2021
- all other services, 23 April 2021.

If you need help or have questions, contact the National Workforce Census Helpline on 1800 800 996 (free call) or email [nwc@srcentre.com.au](mailto:nwc@srcentre.com.au)

[Learn more about the National Workforce Census](#)





# Need help filling entry level roles?

Our Workforce Contact Centre can help you fill entry level positions.

The centre can work with you to:

- advertise vacancies on the department's [Jobs Hub](#) or help you advertise on the [jobactive jobs board](#)
- connect you with employment services or Apprenticeship Network providers in your area who can pre-screen their caseloads for suitable job seekers
- provide information and connections to government programs such as those that offer wage subsidies, free work experience insurance and funding for essential training, and
- develop workforce solutions such as through the Launch into Work pre-employment program.

To get in touch, email [workforce@dese.gov.au](mailto:workforce@dese.gov.au).

## What is Launch into Work?

The Launch into Work program involves:

- identifying job seekers with the values and attributes required for a role within your organisation, and
- developing their skills and experience for the specific role through a pre-employment project.

Projects are co-designed to ensure employer and job seeker needs are met. These projects include training, work experience and mentoring to help job seekers move into sustainable employment.

To register interest, email [workforce@dese.gov.au](mailto:workforce@dese.gov.au)

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



## CCCF applications close 11pm tonight

If your service works with vulnerable and disadvantaged communities or families you may be eligible for the Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive grant.

**But don't miss out – applications close at 11pm (AEDT) tonight.**

If you've started an application make sure to submit it before the deadline.

If you've already submitted an application there's still time to review or update it.

The following resources will help you with your application:

- [Watch this short video](#) about applying
- [Read examples on our website](#) on how funding could be used
- [Read the guidelines, and questions and answers on the Community Grants Hub](#)

[Apply now on the Community Grants Hub](#)



## Have your families confirmed their 2018–19 income?

**If they don't confirm by 31 March, they'll lose their Child Care Subsidy.**

This means you'll need to charge them full fees.

If CCS stops it can start again once their family income is advised. But if there's a gap between CCS stopping and starting again, they'll miss out on CCS for that time.

To confirm their income, families need to:

- lodge their tax return, or
- tell Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can do this using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

There's a [fact sheet](#) on our website you may want to share with families.

### Parents with ex-partners

If a parent separates from their partner/s Services Australia will also need their ex-partner's income.

If a parent at your service is concerned that their ex-partner/s won't lodge their tax return by the deadline they should call the [Families line](#).

Services Australia may be able to balance payments based on a recent estimate of their ex-partner's income so CCS won't stop.

### Resumption of debt repayments

Repayments for Centrelink debts are starting again following the end of the COVID-19 debt pause.

If families have a CCS debt, Services Australia may start deducting money from their CCS payments from the date the debt is due. This means you may need to increase the gap fees you charge families.

Services Australia wants people with a debt to know that they're here to help. If people owe money they don't need to pay it all at once, they can repay it over time.

Families can find out more about the restart of the debt repayments on the [Services Australia website](#).

If families have any questions regarding their payments, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).



## Don't miss out on CCCF Open Competitive funding

You've got until **11pm (AEDT) Monday 1 March** to apply for the Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive grant.

All CCS-approved services are encouraged to [read the guidelines on the Community Grants Hub](#) to check their eligibility. Eligibility criteria for Round 3 is different to previous rounds.

[Watch this short video](#) to find out what's involved in the online application.

If you've already started your application, make sure you **complete it before the deadline**.

If you've already applied, there is still time to review or update your application.

[Apply now on the Community Grants Hub](#)

## Free webinar for educators

### Understanding trauma responses after a bushfire

Be You is holding a free webinar for educators on trauma responses after a bushfire at 3:30pm (AEDT) tomorrow (25 February).

The webinar will cover:

- different types of trauma responses of children and young people following a bushfire
- the educator's role in supporting any response to trauma, and
- strategies to support children's recovery.

Please share this information with educators at your service.

[Register for the webinar](#)

[Learn more about the Be You Bushfire Response Program](#)

## 2021 AEDC National Conference

### Trends in Child Development – The Future of Australia

Join the 2021 Australian Early Development Census National Conference online from 15 to 19 March 2021.

The AEDC is a nationwide data collection of early childhood development. It provides a national measure on the development of all children starting school.



The national conference will focus on lessons learnt from four national collections and how those lessons can shape our responses to current challenges.

Directors and educators may be interested in insights from early childhood services and communities who have used AEDC data to help children get the best start in life.

Registration for the national conference is now open.

[Learn more about the 2021 AEDC National Conference](#)



## CCCF Round 3 now open until 1 March 2021

Services have one more week to apply for the Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive grant.

**Applications are now open until 11pm (AEDT) 1 March 2021.**

Eligibility criteria for Round 3 is different to previous rounds. Your child care service may be eligible for Round 3 funding.

All CCS-approved services are encouraged to [read the guidelines on the Community Grants Hub](#) to check their eligibility.

[Watch this short video](#) to find out what's involved in the online application.

If you've already applied, there is still time to review or update your application.

[Apply now on the Community Grants Hub](#)



## More services eligible for CCCF Open Round 3 grant

The Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive Round 3 grant helps disadvantaged and vulnerable communities and families access quality and affordable child care, and assists services in regional and remote communities.

Up to \$117.4 million in funding is available over three years.

Eligibility criteria for round 3 is different to previous rounds. Your child care service may be eligible for round 3 funding.

### How to check if you're eligible

Approved services may be eligible if they:

- provide care for a disadvantaged or vulnerable community ([check if you are in a round 3 priority area](#)), or
- provide care in a regional, rural or remote area where there are not many other child care services, or
- provide specialised care to a disadvantaged or vulnerable sector of its community, or
- previously received funding in round 1 or 2 of the CCCF open grant opportunity.

All CCS-approved services are encouraged to [read the guidelines on the Community Grants Hub](#) to check their eligibility.

### Applications are closing soon

Don't miss out – applications close 11pm AEDT on Monday (22 February).

[Watch this short video](#) to find out what's involved in the online application.

[Apply now on the Community Grants Hub](#)

## Free webinar: understanding trauma responses after a bushfire

Be You is holding a free webinar on trauma responses after a bushfire at 3:30pm (AEDT) Thursday 25 February.

The webinar will cover:

- different types of trauma responses of children and young people following a bushfire



- the educator’s role in supporting any response to trauma, and
- strategies to support children’s recovery.

[Register for the webinar](#)

[Learn more about the Be You Bushfire Response Program](#)

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander book database



The National Centre for Australian Children’s Literature has produced a free database for educators to find children’s books by and about Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

[Watch this video to learn more](#) or [go to the database](#)

## Service closures

We remind you that if your service closes you must report the closure and any reopening.

You must state the reason for the closure within 24 hours to:

- [CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessments@dese.gov.au)
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#), and
- your third-party software provider.





## Have your families confirmed their income?

As part of Child Care Subsidy balancing families need to confirm their income.

For the 2018–19 financial year families need to do this by 31 March 2021.

We extended this deadline from 30 June 2020 to 31 March 2021 because of COVID-19.

Services Australia is sending letters to families this week reminding them to confirm their 2018-2019 income.

Many families may be unfamiliar with this process.

If they don't confirm their income by 31 March 2021 their CCS will stop. This means you'll need to charge them full fees when they use child care.

If families confirm their income after 31 March, their CCS can start again but it won't be back paid.

### Action for providers

Please ask families at your service to read the letter from Services Australia.

There's also a [fact sheet](#) to help families understand the process on our website. You may wish to share it with your families.

If you receive questions from families, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

[There's more information about balancing for providers on our website.](#)



## Update: COVID-19 restrictions and OSHC

Last week the Victorian Government announced a state-wide lockdown from 11:59pm Friday 12 February until 11:59pm Wednesday 17 February.

We let you know that child care and outside school hours services would remain open during this time.

**We have received updated advice that Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services remain open only for vulnerable children and children whose parents are considered essential workers.**

On-site supervision will be provided at schools for vulnerable children and children whose parents are considered essential workers, who cannot work from home and where no other supervision arrangements can be made. The directions for the on-site supervision of school students also apply to OSHC services.

Early childhood education and care staff are considered essential workers. They do not require a permit or documentation for their children to attend on-site at their school.

Permits are also not required for staff, parents/carers and children who need to travel more than 5km to attend their child care service or school.

We'll continue to monitor the situation closely.

More information can be found on the [Victorian Government's COVID response website](#).



## Update: Victorian lockdown

The Victorian Government has [announced a state-wide five-day lockdown](#) due to an outbreak in hotel quarantine.

Restrictions start at 11:59pm Friday 12 February and run until 11:59pm Wednesday 17 February.

**Child care and outside school hours services remain open.** The department is monitoring the situation closely.

For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#)
- Update your contact details (particularly email addresses) in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software.
- Ask your families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.

[Learn more about COVID-19 restrictions and the early childhood education and care sector](#)



## WA Local Emergency

Last week we declared a Local Emergency for four municipalities affected by bushfires in Western Australia.

The declaration applies from 1 February until 14 February for the following local government areas:

- City of Swan
- Shire of Mundaring
- Shire of Chittering
- Shire of Northam.

The declaration provides affected families with extra absence days if they have reached their 42 allowable absence days.

Generally, Child Care Subsidy isn't paid until a child physically attends a session of care. It also isn't paid after their last day of physical attendance. However, this declaration means families can receive CCS for absences where their child was enrolled in but did not attend care:

- up to 7 days before their first attendance, or
- up to 7 days after their last physical attendance.

We'll continue to monitor the situation in Western Australia.

[Learn more about help in a local emergency on our website](#)

## Are your details up to date on Child Care Finder?

Providers must ensure their details on [Child Care Finder](#) are up to date.

You need to let us know about changes to fees or operating hours within 14 days of any change.

You also need to tell us about anticipated vacancies at your service(s) by 8pm AEDT each Friday.

There's more information about when you need to notify us of a change in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

### How to update your details

You can update your details in the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or through your third-party software.

For help, see the [task card on updating your details in the PEP](#) or contact your third-party software provider.

Please allow up to 24 hours for Child Care Finder to reflect changes.



## Reminder: CCCF applications open



Your service may be eligible for funding under Round 3 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Open Competitive grant.

Priority will be given to supporting services and families in [regional and remote communities](#).

**Applications close at 11pm (AEDT) on Monday, 22 February 2021.**

[Watch this short video to learn more](#)



## Video: Apply for CCCF Open Round 3



Applications are open for the Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive Round 3 grant.

The CCCF helps disadvantaged and vulnerable communities and families access quality and affordable child care.

This next round of the open competitive grant will deliver \$117 million to services over the next three years.

Priority will be given to supporting families in regional and remote communities.

To check your eligibility, [watch this short video](#). In the video we give details about:

- the three funding categories
- who's eligible for funding
- what's involved in the online application.

Applications close 11pm AEDT 22 February 2021.

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



## Update: WA Local Emergency

We have declared a Local Emergency for four municipalities affected by bushfires in Western Australia.

The declaration applies from 1 February until 14 February for the following local government areas:

- City of Swan
- Shire of Mundaring
- Shire of Chittering
- Shire of Northam.

The fires have already forced the closure of several services.

The declaration provides affected families with extra absence days if they have reached their 42 allowable absence days.

At this stage, there is no change to fee charging. If services are claiming the Child Care Subsidy, families must continue to pay the gap fee.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Western Australian Government and the sector to consider if other measures of support are required.

### More information

On our [help in an emergency webpage](#) you will find information about:

- what happens if your service has to close
- accessing additional absences
- recording session reports.

A series of short videos explains:

- [how to prepare for an emergency](#),
- [what to do when one occurs](#), and
- [support we provide to help services recover](#).

### Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency.



## Support for families

Families who have been affected by the fires are encouraged to call the [Disaster Response Hotline](#) on 1800 032 965.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) supports families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

## Other government support

Payments and services are available for individuals recovering from a major disaster.

More information on emergency payments is available on the [Services Australia website](#).

## Mental health support

You may find these resources helpful after an emergency:

- [Be You – Impact of natural disasters on mental health](#)
- [Be You – Educator wellbeing after a natural disaster](#)
- [Emerging Minds – Community Trauma Toolkit](#)
- [Helping Children cope with natural disasters and catastrophes](#)
- [Head to Health](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)





## Are you set for new school year?

With the 2021 school year underway, we'd like to remind you of some key opportunities and issues in early childhood education and care.

## CCCF Open Round 3 applications

Applications are open for the Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive Round 3 grants.

We've allocated \$117 million over the next 3 years to help services in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

Applications close 11pm AEDT 22 February 2021.

[Find out if you're eligible on our website.](#)

## 2021 ECEC National Workforce Census

Last Friday (29 January), we emailed providers a Prior Notification Letter with details of the upcoming 2021 National Workforce Census.

### Action for providers

Please check that you received this email.

If you didn't receive the email, or your email address has changed, please update your contact details in the Provider Entry Point or your third-party software.

If you need to make an update, email [ECEC-NWC@dese.gov.au](mailto:ECEC-NWC@dese.gov.au) to ensure the census reaches you.

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

## Compliance essentials

Would you benefit from a refresher on your obligations under Family Assistance Law?

We've got videos about:

- what to do if children or educators go on holidays
- rules for Family Day Care educators who care for relatives, and
- fit and proper person requirements.

[Watch the compliance mini videos on our website.](#)



## Emergency support

Do you know what support is available if you're affected by a local emergency?

We've got three short videos explaining what you need to know in an emergency.

[Go to videos on our website.](#)

## COVID-19 update

We continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation, including the situation in Western Australia.

[Stay up to date on COVID-19 information for the early childhood sector on our website.](#)



## Final Victorian Recovery Payment

The Australian Government responded to the Victorian lockdown, following a COVID-19 outbreak late last year, with a \$305.6 million Recovery Package.

The package provided support to eligible services in Victoria through a 25% Recovery Payment. This package ended on Sunday (31 January).

Services who submitted their session reports by Sunday (31 January) will receive their final payment from next Monday (8 February).

Services who haven't submitted their session reports should do so as soon as possible to receive payment.

Nationally, the eased activity test remains in place until 4 April 2021.

We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation.

In the case of a local emergency, the existing support measures, such as additional absences, will apply.

[Find out more about help in an emergency on our website](#)



## Western Australia COVID-19 update

We are closely monitoring the child care sector in Western Australia during this lockdown.

The Western Australian Government advises that during this time, child care and outside school hours services remain open for the children of essential workers.

The lockdown restrictions apply to the [Perth metro, Peel and South West regions](#) until 6pm (AWST) on Friday (5 February).

The detection of a positive COVID-19 case, a hotel quarantine worker, prompted the lockdown.

Should the situation change, we'll contact you with additional information and advice.

### Action you can take

We ask you to:

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#)
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) or through your third-party software
- Ask your families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning
- Forward this email to anyone in your organisation who would benefit from regular early childhood and education care updates. And ask them to [subscribe to this newsletter](#).

### More information

- More details on the lockdown can be found on the following WA websites:
- [Western Australian Government COVID-19 response](#)
- [Western Australia Department of Health](#)
- [WA Health Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [WA Department of Communities](#)



## Waiving gap fees ends on Sunday

In response to COVID-19, we introduced a rule that allowed services to waive gap fees when forced to close on public health advice.

This provision ends on Sunday (31 January).

From Monday (1 February), the normal rules apply when a service is closed.

That is, all parents who receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) must make a co-contribution to their child care fees by paying the gap fee.

The gap fee is the remainder of the fees after the CCS amount has been applied.

[Learn more about gap fees in Child Care Provider Handbook](#)

## New local emergencies

We'll continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation, recognising that, at this time, restrictions are easing across Australia.

In the case of a local emergency, the existing support measures, such as additional absences, will apply.

[Find out more about help in an emergency on our website](#)

## Special Circs applications closing

If your service is at risk of closing due to COVID-19, you may be eligible to apply for a Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances grant.

Applications close this Sunday (31 January).

Funding is available:

- for services in Victoria that can show they are at high risk of permanent closure because of COVID-19, despite receiving the Recovery Payment, and
- services outside Victoria who are at imminent risk of temporary or permanent closure because of COVID-19.

Eligible services will be operating in or servicing families from disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, or they are the only suitable service supporting a disadvantaged or vulnerable sector of their community.

[More information about eligibility and how to apply is on our website](#)



## CCS Helpdesk closed Australia Day

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed tomorrow (26 January) and reopens at 9am (AEDT) on Wednesday (27 January).

You can still send questions through our [online enquiry form](#). It is important to fill out all the relevant information so that we can action your query as quickly as possible.

If you need help during this period, you can also refer to our [website](#).



## Vic Govt can pay kinder gap fees

The Victorian Government can make third-party payments towards the out-of-pocket fees for kindergarten children.

Parents who receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) must make a co-contribution to their child care fees under Family Assistance Law by paying the gap fee. The gap fee is the remainder of the fees after CCS has been applied.

This week, a Commonwealth Ministerial rule was introduced in support of the COVID-19 recovery that allows the Victorian Government to pay out-of-pocket fees for four-year-old and eligible three-year-old children in state-funded kindergarten programs (i.e. enrolments that attract Victorian Government kindergarten per capita funding).

The measure supports Victoria's Free Kinder initiative, which aims to provide families with free or cheaper kindergarten in 2021.

By way of example:

- if a session of care fee was \$100, and
- family CCS was 85% (\$85)

**the Victorian Government contribution would be \$15, meaning \$0 gap fee for the family.**

In this case, the Victorian Government can pay up to \$15 as part of the \$2000 fee offset over the 2021 calendar year, and CCS is not impacted for the family.

As the Victorian Government is covering the gap fee, the provider is not required to reduce the actual session fee before applying CCS.

Please note, you must keep records of third-party payments.

Session reports remain the same.

More information on third-party payments can be found on [our website](#).

More information on Free Kinder can be found on the [Victorian Department of Education and Training website](#).



## CCCF grant applications open

Applications are open for Round 3 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Open Competitive grant.

Applications close at 11pm (AEDT) Monday, 22 February 2021.

The grant is for child care services in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and provides funding in three categories:

- Sustainability support to help a service remain viable and sustainable
- Community support to identify and address community-level barriers to child care participation so more children can attend child care

Capital support that contributes to the cost of modifying, renovating, extending or building child care facilities that results in more child care places where there is unmet demand.

[Visit our website](#) for more information about:

- [priority areas](#)
- eligibility
- categories of funding, and
- how to apply.





## Apply for Round 3 CCCF grant

The Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive Round 3 grant opportunity supports services in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

It gives eligible services extra funding to:

- help them stay open, and
- increase the number of children in care from disadvantaged or vulnerable families and communities, including regional and remote areas.

Applications for Round 3 are open and close 11pm (AEDT) on 22 February 2021.

The application forms, guidelines, questions and answers, and other information are available on the [Community Grants Hub](#).

[Learn more about grant opportunity](#)

## Provider Eligible Enrolments

Provider Eligible (PE) Enrolments can only be used in limited circumstances. An example is when a child is 'at risk' for the purposes of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) but the family does not meet residency requirements for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Where a carer is likely to be eligible, regardless of whether or not they have applied for CCS, the family should apply for CCS, and a standard Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) enrolment should be created.

You must contact us at [childwellbeing@dese.gov.au](mailto:childwellbeing@dese.gov.au) to discuss making a PE Enrolment before creating the enrolment to confirm there is no eligible individual.

If you have existing children on a PE Enrolment, you need to make sure you have followed the advice as detailed in Section 41 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

Where a child has been incorrectly entered under a PE Enrolment, you must end the enrolment and enter into a CWA with the carer to start a new enrolment.

## Subsidised care for preschoolers

Families who do not meet the activity test may be eligible for 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight for preschool-aged children.

This exemption applies if a family meets the following criteria:

- they are eligible for Child Care Subsidy



- they are not otherwise exempt from the activity test
- it is the year before their child starts primary school, and
- their child attends a preschool program at a Centre Based Day Care service.

This exemption only applies to preschool-aged children. It does not apply to other children in the same family.

Families should provide Centrelink with their child's expected school start date through [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#). Centrelink will use this information to determine if the exemption applies.

For more information, refer to the [preschool exemption fact sheet](#).

## Online resources

Here is some of the online help available to services on our upgraded [website](#). This includes:

- [Help in an emergency webpage](#), which links to short videos on how to prepare for an emergency, what to do when a crisis strikes, and the Australian Government support available to help you recover
- Information on your [responsibilities and obligations](#), and
- Many other [resources for providers](#).



## Breaking: Brisbane lockdown

The Queensland Government has announced a three-day lockdown for Greater Brisbane, effective from 6pm tonight (Friday, 8 January) to 6pm Monday (11 January).

### What does this mean for kindergartens and child care services?

The [Queensland Government](#) website provides the following information:

- Will kindy/childcare still be operational etc for essential workers?

Yes. Childcare is an essential business. You may leave your home to drop and pick up your child from a kindergarten or day-care.

The website says the local government areas of Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, Redlands and Logan will be subject to the lockdown while contact tracers work to ensure the UK strain of COVID-19 is not circulating in the community.

The [website](#) provides other details on what restrictions mean in those areas.

## Northern Sydney local emergency

The Local Area Emergency Declaration for child care services in the Northern Beaches Local Government Area of Sydney expires at 11:59pm on Sunday (10 January).

[More information can be found here.](#)

### Keep informed about hotspots

We continue to strongly encourage services to stay informed about the COVID situation in your area through official government websites.

State and territory authorities are responding with various measures and restrictions to hotspots as they emerge, as we have seen in Sydney and Melbourne, and now Brisbane.

It is incumbent on services to remain apprised of the situation and to plan in the case of a local emergency.

You need to be aware of how COVID restrictions may affect who can attend your service, including families, educators, staff and visitors.

The [COVID-19 restriction checker](#) is a handy national tool.

Our [Help in an emergency webpage](#) outlines what constitutes a local emergency and the support given by the Australian Government.



## What do the latest COVID restrictions mean for you and your service?

We continue to monitor restrictions imposed by state and territory authorities and what this means for services, families and educators.

We strongly encourage you to stay up to date in your area through official websites.

COVID restrictions, including the ability to travel across borders, and to and from designated hot spots, may affect who can attend your service.

Health requirements may also mean educators, staff and children have to be tested for COVID-19 and to quarantine, and/or follow other rules. In some cases, people have had to quarantine even if they have been cleared of the virus.

Services will need to give careful consideration to all this, and contingencies, as educators return to work and as services progressively become busier with the approaching new school year.

## Keep informed: online resources

It is incumbent on child care services to stay up to date on how the constantly changing circumstances may affect your area and operations, and to plan in case of a local emergency even if one does not seem imminent.

Here are some useful webpages given current circumstances:

- [Restrictions for Northern Beaches](#), NSW Government website
- [Restrictions for Greater Sydney, Central Coast and Wollongong](#), NSW Government website.
- [COVID-19 restriction checker](#), a handy national tool
- Our [Help in an emergency webpage](#), which outlines what constitutes a local emergency and what support is given by the Australian Government.

## Absences and gap fees

All families are permitted 42 absences for each child per financial year.

Services can waive gap fees until 31 January 2021 if they are forced to close on public health advice.

Family Day Care and In Home Care providers must apply to waive gap fees.



## COVID-19 additional absences

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can be paid for additional absences for COVID-19 related reasons without the need for medical evidence for the period 24 March 2020 to 31 December 2020.

If a child did not attend due to COVID-19, before 31 December 2020, you should submit any absences from 43 days and above as additional absences.

Select the reason as 'illness' and tick the evidence provided box. This will allow CCS to be paid for these absences.

If you have submitted absences above the allowable 42 that were due to COVID-19 but you didn't mark them as additional absences, you can amend these as outlined above.

## Support for Northern Sydney

On 21 December 2020, we made a Local Area Emergency Declaration for child care services in the Northern Beaches Local Government Area of Sydney.

This allows families who have already used 42 absence days access to unlimited additional absence days if they cannot attend their child care service due to COVID restrictions. This declaration is in force until 11:59pm on Sunday (10 January).

## Support for Victoria

All children attending a Victorian child care service will have an additional 45 days of extra absences in 2020-21.

These are in addition to the existing 42 days for the 2020–21 financial year, making a total of 87 absence days that can be taken for any reason without the requirement for evidence.

Families can use their allowable absence days where children are not permitted to attend or where families prefer to keep them at home for any reason.

Please stay up to date with our [COVID webpage](#) as support changes depending on hotspots.

## Special Circumstances applications

The Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances grant opportunity may provide financial help to eligible Child Care Subsidy approved services at risk of closure due to COVID-19.

Applications close 31 January 2021.

[More information about eligibility and how to apply is on our website.](#)

## How can we improve approvals?

We want your input as we streamline the child care service approval process.



Nationally, we have two systems, each with their own user interface, which creates a duplication in paperwork and the processing of approvals.

We've released a [Consultation Regulation Impact Statement](#) that explores and discusses improvements. We are interested in what you think and your suggestions.

To have your say, email [CCSA-ChildCareServiceApprovals@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSA-ChildCareServiceApprovals@dese.gov.au).

The deadline for feedback is this Friday.

