



Emails to the early childhood education and care sector

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From the department

Have a safe and happy holiday season

We would like to recognise and thank you for your commitment to early childhood education and care (ECEC) in 2025. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

We remind you that the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Provider Helpdesk will close at 12.30 pm AEDT Wednesday 24 December 2025 and reopen at 9 am AEDT Friday 2 January 2026. We have information about what you need to know over the [Christmas–New Year period](#) on our website.

Make sure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important updates in 2026. Check your contact details through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Mandatory national child safety training is coming

Register for Geccko so you're ready when mandatory national child safety training goes live in the new year.

From 27 February 2026, the following people involved in ECEC must complete the training:

- persons with management and control
- nominated supervisors
- persons in day-to-day charge
- staff
- volunteers
- students.

The training is being developed by the Queensland Government and the Australian Centre for Child Protection. It will be available on Geccko.

You will need your own Geccko account so completions can be tracked correctly. Visit the [Geccko registration page](#) and follow the prompts to create your account.

If you already have your own Geccko account, [log in](#) and update your details. If you use a shared Geccko account, you must [re-register](#) using a personal email address.

Need help? Visit our website for [account support](#). A [communication toolkit](#) is now available to help you brief your teams.

Want to help us test? Email gecko@education.gov.au to join user testing.

Visit the [National Child Safety Training website](#) for more information about the training's development.

CCS periods of emergency in NSW and Tasmania

CCS periods of emergency were declared in parts of NSW following the Bondi Beach terror attack, and in Break O'Day Tasmania following bushfires.

Visit our website to see:



- regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies
- details of support available during and after a period of emergency.

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

Changes to the activity test from January 2026

From 5 January 2026, all CCS eligible families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised care per fortnight. These changes are known as the 3 Day Guarantee.

Families can get 100 hours of subsidised child care each fortnight for each child if they:

care for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child

have more than 48 hours each fortnight of recognised participation

have an exemption or experience exceptional circumstances, or

receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing, temporary financial hardship or grandparent payments.

Families must still pay a gap fee, except in certain circumstances.

Families are not guaranteed a place with a provider. Families will still need to secure a place with their chosen child care service.

Families who want to get more than 72 hours will need to report their recognised participation to Services Australia.

Find out more about the [3 Day Guarantee](#) on our website.

Inclusion support over the holiday period

The Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM) will close from Wednesday 24 December 2025 and reopen on Monday 5 January 2026.

Throughout December, we will prioritise vacation care applications.

Learn more about the [Inclusion Development Fund](#).

Changes to CCS reconciliation date of effect

From 4 December 2025, changes have come into effect that impact the timing of CCS reconciliation decisions.

The change fixed an inconsistency that resulted in some individuals who failed to meet deadlines being over and/or underpaid.

In most cases, the affected individuals would have received too much CCS. For individuals who did not receive enough CCS, they would have initially received too much CCS.

The reconciliation process itself **has not changed**. The date of effect for decisions will continue to be the **first Monday of the next CCS fortnight**.

No action is required from providers.

The new rules will apply to actions or decisions made since 2018. If an individual received too much CCS through no fault of their own, they do not need to repay it.



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

Supporting ECEC in Alice Springs

A new community-led ECEC service has opened in Alice Springs, supported by the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF).

The service is led by Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation (Congress) who already operate the long-established Congress Ampe Kenhe Apmere Gap Road Child Care Centre. The new Congress Child Care Todd Street centre is an expansion of these services, providing high-quality, culturally responsive care to up to 37 children.

This is the third service to open under the [CCCF Restricted Expansion Program](#).

National CCTV Assessment – Sector briefing and expressions of interest

Australian governments are committed to strengthening the safety, health, and wellbeing of children in ECEC.

To support this commitment, Education Ministers have agreed to conduct a national CCTV assessment in up to 300 ECEC services across the country.

We invite services and providers interested in participating in the assessment to attend a sector briefing.

Date: Friday 19 December 2025

Time: 12 pm to 12:30 pm (AEDT)

Join: [Click to access the briefing at the scheduled time](#)

What the session will cover

- An overview of the assessment, its objectives, timelines and role in government's child safety reform agendas.
- The EOI process, including participation payment coverage and ongoing child safety obligations.
- Data collection and monitoring requirements for participating services.

The briefing will be recorded and made available online for those unable to attend.

A formal EOI process will open on **Monday 22 December 2025**. Briefing materials and EOI information will be published on the [department's website](#) that day. Stage 1 of the EOI process will close on Friday 9 January 2026.

Sector spotlight

ECEC services to be included in the Disability Standards for Education

Amendments to the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) are currently before the Australian Parliament.

These changes will clarify services' existing obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and will likely become law on 1 August 2026.

The amendments extend the Standards to ECEC services that:

- receive the CCS



- are legally required to deliver an education program based on an approved learning framework.

This includes:

- Centre Based Day Care
- In Home Care
- Family Day Care
- Outside School Hours Care
- Vacation Care.

The Standards already cover preschool and kindergarten.

The Standards support services to understand:

- what the rights of children and students with disability are
- how services must support children and students with disability.

We are developing new training on the Standards to support leaders, educators and support staff to understand the changes.

You can find [more information](#) on our website.

Inclusion Capability Project update

A supported trial of the new [Inclusive Practice Framework](#) is underway.

We engaged ACECQA to develop the framework to:

- strengthen the capability of services to embed inclusive practices
- better support children and families experiencing barriers to access and participation.

A trial of the framework began in October 2025. The trial is led by Griffith University, Macquarie University and Queensland University of Technology. It involves around 20 diverse services that will test and refine the framework.

The trial will be rolled out progressively across services up until early April 2026. It will inform ACECQA's final report, which is due in June 2026.

ACECQA is also developing evidence-based professional development resources. These will help service leaders and educators embed inclusion. A new [Introduction to Inclusive Practice](#) module is now available on the ACECQA website. More resources will be progressively rolled out over the next 6 months.

The framework and supporting resources will complement the:

- [Inclusion Support Program](#)
- upcoming amendments to the [Disability Standards for Education](#).

Help families find you in 2026

[StartingBlocks.gov.au](#), the one-stop-shop for families to find and compare ECEC services, now displays hourly fees. This helps families make informed choices, but some services have incorrect fee information.

Here's what you need to do:



- check your fees and vacancies on StartingBlocks.gov.au
- if they're incorrect, update them through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software
- allow 24 to 48 hours for changes to appear.

See instructions on [how to update fee and vacancy information](#).

Unable to update your fees online? Ask an authorised person to email the CCS Provider Helpdesk with the following:

- correct fee amount
- date the fee applies from
- subject line: Hourly fee update.

Keep your details up to date so families can find you in 2026.

Facts from FAL

FDC and IHC providers – are you ready for direct gap fee collection?

From 1 January 2026, Family Day Care and In Home Care providers must collect CCS gap fees directly from families.

This means that educators in these services will no longer be able to [collect the gap fee](#) themselves on behalf of providers.

We have partnered with the following organisations to support your transition.

Visit their websites for more information:

- [Direct Gap Fee Collection Resources](#) from Family Day Care Australia
- [In Home Care Direct Gap Fee Collection](#) from NSW Family Day Care Association.

Reporting absences on public holidays

All service types can report absences on public holidays if the service would have been open otherwise.

For example:

- a service that is open on Mondays can report absences for a public holiday on a Monday
- a service that only operates from Wednesday to Friday cannot report absences for a public holiday on a Monday.

On a public holiday, you can only report absences for children who would have normally attended care on that day.

If you do report an absence for a public holiday, you must still collect the gap fee from families. It is up to providers whether or not to report an absence and charge families on a public holiday.

You can find further information about [CCS over the 2025–26 Christmas–New Year period](#) on our website.

Workforce support

Worker retention payment update

Thank you for engaging with the worker retention payment this year. Your commitment is helping strengthen and sustain the ECEC workforce.

Gender-based undervaluation – priority awards review

On 10 December 2025, the Expert Panel for pay equity in the care and community sector announced its decision on the *Children's Services Award 2010*, effective 1 March 2026.

The worker retention payment has been designed to absorb the impact of the review for the life of the program. As each classification under the *Children's Services Award 2010* will receive an increase that is less than the amount provided by the worker retention payment, the amount you must pay above award will reduce by an amount equivalent to the award increase.

Applications are still open for eligible providers who wish to apply.

This change will not impact the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020*.

We will share more details soon.

To find out more, visit the [Fair Work Commission website](#).

We're processing payments

We have processed worker retention payments for the period 3 to 30 November 2025.

We processed this payment on 15 December 2025. This is the day we processed the payment, not necessarily the date you will receive funds.

We make payments at the service-level through the Child Care Subsidy System. We send payments to the same bank account as your CCS payments.

Reminder on deadline for backdated funding review

If your situation doesn't fit the standard payment calculation, you may [request a funding review](#).

To receive top up payments backdated to when you first became eligible for the worker retention payment, you must:

- contact the CCS Provider Helpdesk before it closes at **12:30 pm AEDT on 24 December 2025**
- request a funding review application form
- submit the completed form by **31 December 2025**.

You may still request a funding review in 2026, but top up payments will only be backdated to the start of the previous reporting period.

Tell your community you've signed up

Is your service receiving the worker retention payment? Use our [worker retention payment communication toolkit](#) to let your community know. You may use the materials once you've been approved and entered into a grant agreement.



Apply for the worker retention payment

As we head towards a new year and the priority awards review decision has been made, we invite eligible services who haven't yet joined the program to take part. If you're thinking of applying, we have [information and resources](#) to guide you through the process.

Educator wellbeing after extreme weather events

Are you working or living in an area affected by severe weather events?

These events can impact individuals as well as communities. As an educator, you may be supporting children while also navigating your own responses.

Taking time to look after yourself is important. Prioritising your wellbeing means you will be in a better position to support those around you.

To support yourself and your learning community, explore Be You's [natural disaster response](#) resources.

News for families

We're replacing the CCS activity test

From 5 January 2026, families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight, or 3 days per week.

The change is known as the 3 Day Guarantee.

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



From the department

Register now for mandatory national child safety training

Mandatory national child safety training is coming - register for Geccko today so you're ready when the training goes live.

From 27 February 2026, the following people involved in early childhood education and care (ECEC) must complete mandatory national child safety training:

- persons with management and control
- nominated supervisors
- persons in day-to-day charge
- staff
- volunteers
- students.

Action required

You will need a Geccko account to access and complete the training.

To ensure personal training completions can be tracked and reported correctly, all users must have an individual account using a personal email. Generic or shared emails are not permitted.

Providers should encourage staff to register early.

How to register

Registering for Geccko is easy. Visit the [Geccko registration page](#) and follow the prompts to create your account.

If you already have your own Geccko account, [log in](#) and update your details. If you use a shared Geccko account, you must [re-register](#) using a personal email address.

[Find out more](#) and get step-by-step support on our website.

Test new training in Geccko

We're looking for volunteers to help test new training in Geccko.

We're looking for people who:

- have experience in early education settings
- are willing to test platform features (no technical expertise required)
- can join short sessions (1-2 hours) in December, January and February.

If you would like to get involved, email gecko@education.gov.au.



Preschool Reform Agreement extended

The Preschool Reform Agreement has been extended until the end of 2027.

The agreement is a joint initiative between all governments to strengthen the delivery of preschool and better prepare children for full-time school.

It guarantees access to 15 hours of quality preschool per week (600 hours per year) for children in the year before full-time school, regardless of the early childhood setting. This helps ensure universal access to affordable, high-quality preschool programs for children and families across Australia.

This Australian Government has made available over \$3 billion in funding to states and territories over the life of the agreement.

The extended agreement will:

- continue passing on the Australian Government's per-child contribution for preschool programs
- support the implementation of the [Preschool Outcomes Measure](#)
- continue implementation of new national enrolment and attendance measures.

Find out more about the [Preschool Reform Agreement](#).

Worker retention payment update

A few important reminders as the year draws to a close.

Survey closing this week

There is still time to have your say on the worker retention payment. An independent survey, run by ORIMA Research, closes 12 pm AEDT 15 December 2025.

Search your inbox for a unique email invitation from surveys@orima.com. The survey is voluntary, confidential, and findings are deidentified.

15% wage increase now in effect

You must ensure you are paying 15% above the relevant award to all eligible staff. You can view the [new minimum rates](#) on our website.

More services now eligible

Services that previously exceeded the fee growth cap can now apply for the worker retention payment if they comply with a new combined cap over 2 years. Learn more and apply for the [worker retention payment](#).

Deadline for backdated funding review is approaching

If your situation doesn't fit the standard payment calculation, you may [request a funding review](#).

Request a funding review by **31 December 2025** to be considered for top up payments backdated to the date you became eligible for the worker retention payment.

You may still request a funding review after this date, but top up payments will only be backdated to the start of the previous reporting period.



National child safety bill passed

National legislation to strengthen child safety has passed the Victorian parliament, on behalf of all governments.

Key reforms include:

- making the safety, rights and best interests of children the paramount consideration in the operation of an ECEC service
- establishing a national educator register
- working with children check (WWCC) changes
- safe use of digital devices
- making inappropriate conduct an offence
- expanding powers of regulatory authorities
- mandating nationally consistent child safety training
- additional measures for Family Day Care (FDC).

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

Changes to the activity test from January 2026

From 5 January 2026, all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligible families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised care per fortnight. These changes are known as the 3 Day Guarantee.

Families can get 100 hours of subsidised child care each fortnight for each child if they:

- care for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child
- have more than 48 hours each fortnight of recognised participation
- have an exemption or experience exceptional circumstances, or
- receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing, temporary financial hardship or grandparent payments.

Families must still pay a gap fee, except in certain circumstances.

Families are not guaranteed a place with a provider. Families will still need to secure a place with their chosen child care service.

Families who want to get more than 72 hours will need to report their recognised participation to Services Australia.

Find out more about the [3 Day Guarantee](#) on our website.

CCS periods of emergency in Southern Tasmania, NSW Central Coast and NSW Lake Macquarie

CCS periods of emergency are in place in Southern Tasmania, NSW Central Coast and NSW Lake Macquarie following bushfires.



Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the periods of emergency apply](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency.](#)

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

New legislative powers to support the Early Education Service Delivery Prices project

The Australian Government has amended the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* to support the Early Education Service Delivery Prices project.

The changes mean we can request information from providers about the cost of delivering ECEC, if we need it.

Supported by Deloitte Access Economics, the project will help us better understand what it costs providers to deliver safe and quality ECEC. It is a crucial step on the path to universal ECEC.

We encourage all providers to participate voluntarily. By doing so, you'll help:

- ensure the data reflects the diversity of the sector
- inform future reforms
- pave the way to universal ECEC.

The amendment strengthens the project by ensuring robust and representative data collection. The power applies only to constitutional corporations.

We will contact providers with more details about the project soon. Please make sure your contact information is up to date in the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Help will be available to ensure everyone can take part.

Find out more about the [Early Education Service Delivery Prices project](#).

ECEC staff survey closing soon

The ECEC staff survey is closing on Monday 15 December. Help us better understand the views and perspectives of the ECEC workforce!

The findings will inform national policies to support the ECEC workforce. It will give us a better picture of:

- staff wellbeing and satisfaction with employment conditions and workplace culture
- staff views on working in the sector
- factors impacting attraction and retention in the ECEC sector.

The survey is for directors, managers, coordinators, educational leaders, teachers and educators.

The survey is quick and confidential. It takes less than 10 minutes, is voluntary, and results are reported in deidentified form.



You can also enter the draw to win one of 50 \$200 vouchers.

ORIMA Research is conducting this survey on our behalf. Keep your eye out for an email invitation from surveys@orima.com.

Please share information about the survey with your staff and encourage them to complete it. Visit the [survey portal](#) to access an email, poster and flyer to distribute at your service.

Are you ready for an emergency?

Natural disasters and emergencies can happen without warning. Preparing now can help keep children and staff safe and reduce damage to your property.

Here are practical steps to help you plan and protect your service:

Prepare your business

[Business.gov.au](#) has information and resources to help you develop an emergency management plan and keep your business running during tough times.

Check your insurance cover

Identify the types of disasters your service may face and assess the likelihood of each. Make sure you have the right level of [business insurance](#), including cover for property damage and business interruption.

Back up and secure your data

Regularly back up important business documents and store them in a secure location or cloud-based system. This includes:

- registration records
- financial records
- customer data.

Find out [how to create a cyber security policy](#) at [business.gov.au](#).

Understand emergency support

Familiarise yourself with the [support](#) we provide to services and families during a CCS period of emergency.

Update your contact details

We notify providers by email when a period of emergency is declared in their region, using the details in the CCS System.

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

Notify us if you close

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

Stay connected

[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#) for the latest alerts and updates.



Facts from FAL

Reminder that fee reporting is due 14 January

You must notify us of your fees 14 days after the end of the calendar year. Fee reporting is due 14 January 2026.

This also includes reporting no change to fees.

To report no change, update the date of event on the fees and inclusions screen via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

This reporting obligation is in addition to the requirement to report the fees within 14 days of:

- the end of financial year
- receiving CCS approval
- starting the CCS approved service
- changing your fees.

Read more about [notifications and reporting](#) on our website.

Payments and fees

You must pass on CCS to families as a fee reduction. You must report [fee information](#).

Enrolments

You must [enrol](#) children correctly so families can get CCS. You must submit enrolment notices on time.



Tropical Cyclone Fina: CCS period of emergency expanded to 4 additional areas

We've added 4 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of the Northern Territory due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Fina.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 19 November to 1 December 2025 in the following local government areas (LGAs):

- **Litchfield Council**
- **Unincorporated Areas** – view the list of [unincorporated areas](#)
- **Victoria Daly Regional Council**
- **West Daly Regional Council**
- Belyuen Community Government Council
- Coomalie Community Government Council
- City of Darwin
- City of Palmerston
- Tiwi Islands Regional Council
- Wagait Shire Council
- West Arnhem Regional Council.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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



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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Other disaster support

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at nt.gov.au/emergency.



Southern Tasmania bushfires: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Southern Tasmania following bushfires.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 4 to 11 December 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Derwent Valley
- Southern Midlands
- Glamorgan Spring Bay
- Glenorchy City
- Huon Valley

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your contact details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.



Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [alert.tas.gov.au](#).



NSW bushfires: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in NSW Central Coast and Lake Macquarie following bushfires.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 6 to 12 December 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Central Coast Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your contact details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Families may be able to access:



- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).



From the department

Service closures to support mandatory child safety training

The Australian Government is making changes in 2026 to help early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff complete mandatory child safety training while minimising impact on families.

This measure allows Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved ECEC services to:

- close for up to 5 hours annually to support staff in completing **mandatory child safety training**
- continue claiming CCS during these closure periods.

Services will have flexibility in how they structure closures. However, to minimise disruption to families they must not close any earlier than 5 pm. They may remain closed until the end of their standard operating hours.

Closures are not compulsory.

The measure:

- supports services to help staff complete mandatory child safety training
- minimises inconvenience for families
- responds to concerns about the time and cost of supporting staff to undertake the training.

This mandatory child safety training was [announced](#) in August 2025 as part of national reforms to improve safety and quality in ECEC. It is subject to the passage of legislation.

Providers must tell families early about closure timing. This will allow families time to find alternative care.

More information for providers, services and families will be available in the coming months.

Visit [our website](#) for information about this measure.

Worker retention payment update

15% wage increase has started

If you get the worker retention payment, you must now pay all eligible staff 15% above the relevant award rate.

Visit our website to [view the minimum rates](#) you must pass on to staff. Remember:

- all funding must be used for wages or eligible on-costs
- any remaining funds may be used to smooth funding across other services on your grant agreement.



More services can now apply

Services that exceeded the fee growth cap can now apply for the worker retention payment if they comply with a new combined cap over 2 years.

Previously, services that increased fees by more than 4.4% between 8 August 2024 and 7 August 2025 were not eligible. These services can now apply if:

- their total fee increase does not exceed 8.6% from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2026
- their fee increase does not exceed 4.2% from 8 August 2025 to 7 August 2026.

Learn more and [apply for the worker retention payment](#).

Survey closing soon

There is still time to have your say on the worker retention payment. An independent survey, run by ORIMA Research, closes 12 pm AEDT 15 December 2025.

Search your inbox for a unique email invitation from surveys@orima.com. The survey is quick, voluntary, confidential, and findings are deidentified.

If you have questions about the survey, contact SPS@education.gov.au. If you need technical support, contact surveys@orima.com.

We're processing payments

We have processed worker retention payments for the period 6 October to 2 November 2025.

We processed this payment on 29 November 2025. Please note this is the day we processed the payment, not necessarily the date you will receive funds.

We make payments at the service-level through the Child Care Subsidy System. We send payments to the same bank account as your CCS payments.

We're also processing the next worker retention payment early to make sure you receive it before the New Year. This payment covers the period 3 to 30 November 2025.

To get the correct amount, submit your session reports for this period by **7 December 2025**. Session reports submitted after this date will be included in the next payment in January.

Eligible providers who are expecting their first payment in December will not get their historical leave liability payments in this cycle. These will be paid 2 to 7 days before the next payment in January.

Learn more about [when and how we make worker retention payments](#).

2025–26 Christmas–New Year period

Have you read our information about the 2025–26 Christmas–New Year period?

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

Read more about [CCS and the 2025–26 Christmas–New Year period](#) on our website.



Small-scale market sounding closes soon

Submissions from smaller not-for-profit providers, local governments, First Nations led providers and Family Day Care services to help shape future grants under the Building Early Education Fund close 5 pm AEDT 18 December 2025.

If you can build or expand and deliver Centre Based Day Care services in areas of need or modify existing buildings to deliver in-venue Family Day Care, share your insights before the deadline.

Your feedback will help us design practical, targeted grants for the sector.

Learn more about [market sounding](#).

CCS period of emergency in NT and Qld

A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency was declared for parts of the Northern Territory due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Fina, and parts of Queensland due to the impact of severe storms.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Have your say on a new First Nations Education Policy

Submissions for the new First Nations Education Policy are now open.

We are developing the new Policy in partnership with:

- First Nations stakeholders
- state and territory governments
- non-government groups.

The new Policy will aim to ensure First Nations learners can access and thrive in education systems that are culturally safe, responsible, and accountable.

You can now have your say. Submissions are open until 6 February 2026.

We want to hear from First Nations peoples and others who want to help accelerate the improvement of First Nations learners' outcomes and experiences. We want to know what you think should be included in the Policy.

How to make a submission:

- complete an online survey, or
- upload a written, video, or audio response.

To make a submission or learn more, visit [First Nations Education Policy](#).



Unannounced spot checks program to roll out nationally

We're increasing our unannounced spot checks to ECEC services.

These visits help ensure services meet their legal obligations and administer the CCS correctly. They do not replace routine checks carried out by state or territory regulators. If safety or quality issues are identified during spot checks, we will report them to the local regulator.

Spot checks are about lifting standards and giving families confidence that services are safe and compliant. This comes following a successful pilot in October/November 2025. Findings from the pilot are being used to shape a scalable and nationally consistent approach to spot checks.

For more details, visit [spot checks](#) on our website.

Changes to early childhood education and care legislation passes

On Friday 28 November, legislation for the ECEC sector passed parliament.

The [changes](#) make the legislation clearer, promote transparency, and remove ambiguity.

These include:

- requiring providers to share information about the cost of delivering ECEC
- sharing and disclosing information collected under Family Assistance Law (FAL), and
- technical amendments to remove inconsistencies.

Sector spotlight

We want your input! Nationwide CCTV assessment in ECEC settings

Australian Governments are committed to strengthening the safety, health, and wellbeing of children in ECEC.

To support this, Education Ministers have agreed to conduct a national CCTV assessment in up to 300 ECEC services nationwide.

Why your voice matters:

We want to understand how CCTV is currently used in ECEC services, its purpose, and your views on its future role.

Have your say:

Please take 2 minutes to [complete this short survey](#) by Friday 12 December 2025.

Your feedback will help shape the design of the national assessment.

We ask that each service provider submits one response per ECEC site. If you are responding for multiple sites, please note this in the survey.



More information for families on StartingBlocks.gov.au

StartingBlocks.gov.au will now display 6 types of enforcement actions taken by state and territory regulators over the past 2 years.

These include:

- conditions on provider or service approval
- amendment of provider or service approval
- suspension of provider or service approval
- compliance notices
- emergency action notices
- enforceable undertakings.

StartingBlocks.gov.au will also include:

- new resources to help you explain these actions to families
- links to the Child Care Subsidy enforcement action register.

These updates build on recent changes on 1 September to display the most recent regulatory visit to each service. They are part of a broader national commitment to [improving quality and safety in ECEC](#).

You don't need to take any action for compliance information to appear – it will be provided by your regulator. But you should ensure your other details, such as fees and vacancies are up to date. You can update these details via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Facts from FAL

Understanding privacy obligations

You collect personal information from families when you enrol children. You share this information with us so they can get CCS.

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

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

So that families can get CCS, we need to:

- collect their personal information
- share this information with other government departments, like Services Australia.



Make sure that families understand that we cannot provide CCS without their permission for you to share information with us.

You must also take reasonable steps to protect the personal information that you hold about families. Find simple tips to safeguard data from breaches on our website.

Read more about:

- your [privacy obligations](#)
- how we handle personal information in our [privacy policy](#).

Collecting gap fees

Providers must take all reasonable steps to [collect gap fees](#) from families electronically.

Provider approvals

You must be [approved to operate an ECEC service](#) and administer CCS.

Workforce support

Discounted care for staff

Did you know you can offer discounted care to some staff without reducing their CCS?

The workforce discount is an optional incentive to help you attract and retain qualified staff.

You can offer the workforce discount to:

- early childhood teachers and educators
- centre directors and coordinators who hold an ECEC qualification
- cooks.

The employee must:

- work at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service
- have a child enrolled at a service where they work or that you own.

The workforce discount:

- is a [prescribed discount](#)
- is applied after CCS calculation
- will not reduce a family's CCS entitlement
- requires the employee to pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

Learn more about the [workforce discount](#).



Play and children's wellbeing

Join Be You for an online event on how child-led play supports children's wellbeing, regulation, and resilience.

This event will discuss ways to create a shared approach that increases opportunities for child-led play.

The session will take place online at 12 pm AEDT on 10 December 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)

Share with families

How you pay for Family Day Care or In Home Care will be changing soon

From 1 January 2026, you will need to pay your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) gap fee directly to your Family Day Care (FDC) or In Home Care (IHC) provider.

The gap fee is the out-of-pocket amount that you pay after your CCS amount is applied.

FDC and IHC educators will no longer be able to collect your gap fees on behalf of the FDC or IHC provider.

If you currently pay your gap fees directly to an educator, your service will contact you to set up new payment processes with you.

All gap fees must be paid by EFT (unless an exemption has been granted).

Check with your service if you have any questions.



Qld storms: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of severe storms.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 to 28 November 2025 in the following local government areas (LGAs):

- Central Highlands
- Fraser Coast
- Moreton Bay
- Noosa
- Sunshine Coast.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [qld.gov.au/emergency](#).



Service closures to support mandatory child safety training

The Australian Government is making changes in 2026 to help early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff complete mandatory child safety training while minimising impact on families.

This measure allows Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved ECEC services to:

- close for up to 5 hours annually to support staff in completing **mandatory child safety training**
- continue claiming CCS during these closure periods.

Services will have flexibility in how they structure closures. However, to minimise disruption to families they must not close any earlier than 5 pm. They may remain closed until the end of their standard operating hours.

Closures are not compulsory. This measure:

- supports services to help staff complete mandatory child safety training
- minimises inconvenience for families
- responds to concerns about the time and cost of supporting staff to undertake the training.

This mandatory child safety training was [announced](#) in August 2025 as part of national reforms to improve safety and quality in ECEC. It is subject to the passage of legislation.

Providers must tell families early about closure timing. This will allow families time to find alternative care.

More information for providers, services and families will be available in the coming months.

Service closures for mandatory child



Tropical Cyclone Fina: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of the Northern Territory due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Fina.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 19 November to 1 December 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Belyuen Community Government Council
- Coomalie Community Government Council
- City of Darwin
- City of Palmerston
- Tiwi Islands Regional Council
- Wagait Shire Council
- West Arnhem Regional Council.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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



Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [nt.gov.au/emergency](#).



From the Department

Worker retention payment update

Tell us about your experience with the worker retention payment

ORIMA Research is helping us understand your experience with the worker retention payment through an independent survey.

The survey will help us understand what's working and what needs improvement. We want to hear about:

- your awareness and experience with the program
- the impact of the program on staff recruitment and retention.

The survey is voluntary, confidential, and findings are deidentified. Search your inbox for a unique email invitation from surveys@orima.com

The survey closes at 12 pm AEDT Monday 15 December 2025.

If you have questions about the survey, contact SPS@education.gov.au. If you need technical support, contact surveys@orima.com.

15% wage increase starts next week

If you get the worker retention payment, you must pay 15% above the relevant award to eligible staff from 1 December 2025.

We encourage you to:

- [view the minimum rates](#) on our website
- plan for the increase and advise your staff.

Remember: all funding must be used for wages or eligible on-costs.

More services eligible from next week

Services that previously exceeded the fee growth cap can become eligible for the worker retention payment from 1 December 2025.

To qualify, these services must comply with a combined cap over 2 years.

Learn more about [what this means for your service](#).

CCS period of emergency – national

A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place nationally following the recall of play sand due to asbestos risks.

Visit our website to see:



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

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

Preparing for an emergency

Watch our quick guide on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krgCtAnyiI8>

Are you ready for severe weather events like bushfires or floods? Being prepared can make all the difference for your service and the families you support.

Here are some practical ways to stay ready:

- Check the [support available in the event of a CCS period of emergency](#) on our website.
- Review your insurance cover. Consider disaster and business disruption insurance to protect against losses during recovery.
- Back up your important documents in a secure offsite location or cloud-based storage.
- Keep your contact details up to date in the CCS System so you don't miss critical updates. Check your details via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.
- Notify us if you close your service due to an emergency. Use the [PEP](#) or your third-party software and remember to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Stay connected! [Join our Facebook group](#) and turn on post notifications to get the latest alerts and updates.

Facts from FAL

Advertising your service

You can only offer certain types of [inducements](#) to secure a child's enrolment.

Absences

You must report when a child was absent and the family was charged. You must report [absences](#) in session reports.

Workforce support

Professional development subsidy payments

Payments issued

We are issuing payments for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies.

If you were successful in the recent round, you can expect your payment soon. Payments will be sent to each eligible service's bank account.



What to do after receiving payments

- Check your grant agreement for a reminder on the permitted uses for the subsidy.
- Keep records demonstrating the correct use of funding in case of compliance checks.
- Acquit your funding through the [grants portal](#) by 14 July 2026.

Next round

Thank you to everyone who applied for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies.

We received a high volume of applications for our first round and have exhausted our funding for this financial year.

As a result, we will not proceed with a second round of applications in 2025–26. The subsidies will open again in 2026–27.

Keep an eye on our website for [information about future rounds](#).

News for families

Changes to CCS

From January 2026, CCS eligible families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight or 3 days per week. Families are not guaranteed a place with a provider. Families will still need to secure a place with their chosen child care service and may need to pay a gap fee.

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



Recalled play sand due to asbestos risks: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency nationally following the recall of play sand due to asbestos risks.

A CCS period of emergency supports families and services when there are widespread closures that prevent children from attending care.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 12 to 21 November 2025. During this period services may be able to claim CCS whilst closed (for enrolled hours during the period only) and families may be able to access gap fee waivers and extra absences.

The **person with management or control** of an impacted service must contact ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au using the subject line "asbestos incident". Provide your service name and ID, along with the following information:

If you were directed to close

A copy of the notice from your regulator directing you to close.

If you voluntarily closed

A copy of your ACECQA [closure notification](#) and details on:

- how the emergency impacted your service
- what remediation has taken place.

State and territory regulators have reached out to ECEC providers with information and guidance on disposal. Community Child Care Fund and In Home Care services that are regulated by the Australian Government have been contacted by the department.

For more information, speak to your provider or [contact your local regulator](#).

Actions needed

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#), to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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



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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

Affected services can apply to receive support during the CCS period of emergency. This includes services:

- directed to close by their regulators
- that voluntarily closed because of the emergency.

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.



From the department

2025–26 Christmas–New Year period

We've published what you need to know about the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) over the 2025–26 Christmas–New Year period.

The key things to know are:

- the CCS Helpdesk will close at 12.30 pm AEDT Wednesday 24 December 2025 and reopen at 9 am AEDT Friday 2 January 2026
- you must not submit session reports or claim absences when your service is closed, unless it is a public holiday or during a period of emergency
- you must report shorter hours if you close early on Wednesday 24 December
- session reports submitted on public holidays may experience short delays in processing or payment
- you must collect the gap fee when claiming absences on a public holiday
- you must tell us if you are closing your service or changing operating hours.

Read more about [CCS and the 2025–26 Christmas–New Year period](#) on our website.

Worker retention payment update

Get ready for the 15% wage increase

From 1 December 2025, you must pay eligible workers at least 15% above the relevant award rate.

We have [information to help you prepare for this change](#), including:

- the current award rates
- the new minimum rate from 1 December 2025 (15% above award)
- the additional minimum amount payable to all staff from 1 December 2025 (5%).

Remember: all funding must be used for wages or eligible on-costs.

More services can apply soon

From 1 December 2025, services that previously exceeded the fee growth cap can become eligible for the worker retention payment.

To qualify, these services must comply with a combined cap over 2 years.

Learn more about [what this means for your service](#).

CCS period of emergency in Brisbane City Council LGA

We've declared a CCS period of emergency in Brisbane City Council local government area (LGA) in Queensland following storm activity.



The CCS period of emergency applies from 26 October to 30 October 2025.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Not for profits: help shape future grants

We are asking smaller not-for-profit providers, local governments, First Nations led providers and Family Day Care services to help shape future grants under the Building Early Education Fund.

We want to hear from you if you can:

- build or expand and deliver Centre Based Day Care in areas of need
- modify buildings to deliver in-venue Family Day Care.

Submissions close 5 pm AEDT 18 December 2025. This is not a grant application. Your responses will help us design practical, targeted grants.

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

ECEC staff – we want to hear from you!

We're inviting ECEC staff to have your say in a national survey. Help us better understand the views and perspectives of the ECEC workforce!

The findings will inform national policies to support the ECEC workforce. It will give us a better picture of:

- staff wellbeing and satisfaction with employment conditions and workplace culture
- staff views on working in the sector
- factors impacting attraction and retention in the ECEC sector.

The survey is for directors, managers, coordinators, educational leaders, teachers and educators.

The survey is quick and confidential. It takes less than 10 minutes, is voluntary, and results are reported in de-identified form.

You can also enter the draw to win one of 50 \$200 vouchers.

ORIMA Research is conducting this survey on our behalf. Keep your eye out for an email invitation from surveys@orima.com.

Please share information about the survey with your staff and encourage them to complete it. Visit the [survey portal](#) to access an email, poster and flyer to distribute at your service.

The survey closes on Monday 15 December 2025.

Fraud Awareness Week: simple steps to safeguard your service

Fraud Awareness Week is here, a reminder of the vital role you play in preventing and detecting fraud in ECEC services.



Protecting families and maintaining trust in the CCS system starts with you:

 **Check your compliance**

Review your [obligations](#) and confirm your service meets all requirements.

 **Complete the Fraud Awareness Course**

Learn practical steps to prevent, detect, and report fraud on [Geccko](#).

 **Report suspected fraud**

Use our [CCS fraud tip-off form](#). It is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to complete.

Learn more about [reporting CCS fraud](#) on our website.

Facts from FAL

Caring for close family members in Family Day Care

You cannot claim CCS when an educator is caring for close family members.

This includes the educator's or their partner's:

- child, foster child, adopted child, kinship child or any child for which you have legal responsibility
- brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister.

[Watch this video](#) to learn about the rules for FDC educators who care for their own children or siblings and read more about [providing care for relatives](#) on our website.

Session reports

You must submit accurate and complete [session reports](#). You must submit them on time.

Workforce support

Transforming educator wellbeing to create a thriving workplace

Join Be You for an online event on supporting educator wellbeing.

This event will explore ways learning communities can help educators foster children's social and emotional development through a holistic approach.

The session will take place online at 2:00 pm AEDT on 28 November 2025.

[Register for the webinar](#).



QLD storms: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Brisbane City Council local government area (LGA) in Queensland following storm activity.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 26 October to 30 October 2025. We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#), to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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

Support after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.



Other disaster support

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at gld.gov.au/emergency.



From the department

Child safety bill introduced

Yesterday, national legislation was introduced into the Victorian Parliament to strengthen child safety.

Key reforms include safe use of digital devices, making inappropriate conduct an offence, expanding powers of regulatory authorities, mandating nationally consistent child safety training and additional measures for family day care.

[Read the announcement](#) to find out how the bill will address critical areas of child safety.

Help shape the Building Early Education Fund

We are inviting more organisations to share insights that will help design future grant opportunities under the Building Early Education Fund. Market sounding for small not-for-profit providers, including in-venue Family Day Care providers, and local governments is now open.

The Building Fund is a \$1 billion investment to build and expand early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in areas of need. We want to hear from you about your capacity, interest and any constraints involved in building and operating a new service. Your information will help us design grants that are practical, targeted and effective.

We are already engaging with large not-for-profit ECEC providers about building multiple new services at scale. We now want to hear from smaller not-for-profit providers, local governments, First Nations led providers and Family Day Care services that can:

- build or expand and deliver Centre Based Day Care in areas of need
- modify buildings to deliver in-venue Family Day Care.

Submissions are open until 5 pm AEDT 18 December 2025. This is not a grant application. Your responses will inform the design and eligibility criteria for future grants.

We will host a webinar for providers interested in learning more about market sounding at 11–11:45 am AEDT on 20 November 2025. We will provide more details about how to join the session shortly.

Find out [how to take part in market sounding](#) on our website.

Worker retention payment update

More services eligible for worker retention payment

More ECEC services can access the worker retention payment.

From 1 December 2025 services that exceeded the fee growth cap can become eligible for the worker retention payment if they comply with a new combined cap over 2 years.

Previously, services that increased fees by more than 4.4% between 8 August 2024 and 7 August 2025 were not eligible. Now, these services can become eligible if their total fee increase does not exceed 8.6% over the 2 years from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2026 (and does not exceed 4.2% from 8 August 2025 to 7 August 2026).



Providers can apply for these newly eligible services from 1 December 2025. These services will not be eligible for funding for the first year of the program.

All other services remain subject to the original annual fee growth caps:

- 4.4% between 8 August 2024 and 7 August 2025
- 4.2% between 8 August 2025 and 7 August 2026.

Providers may request an alternative fee growth cap in limited circumstances where financial viability is impacted.

This change:

- enables more providers and services to participate
- supports wage increases for more workers
- helps keep fees affordable for families
- ensures services that signed up earlier and stayed within the caps are not worse off than those joining later.

Learn more about the [worker retention payment](#).

Share your experience with the worker retention payment

The worker retention payment is providing a 15% wage increase for the ECEC workforce. An independent survey, run by ORIMA Research, will help us understand what's working and what needs improvement.

The survey asks about:

- your awareness of the program
- your experience with the application process, guidance and support
- the impact of the program on staff recruitment and retention.

The survey is quick and confidential. It takes less than 10 minutes, is voluntary, and results are reported in deidentified form.

Look for your unique email invitation from ORIMA Research to have your say. The survey closes at 12 pm AEDT Monday 15 December 2025.

If you have questions about the survey, contact SPS@education.gov.au. If you need technical support, contact surveys@orima.com.

Access free support

Help is available to understand, apply for, and comply with the worker retention payment.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Ai Group is holding information sessions between 12 November and 3 December 2025 to help:

- providers who have signed up prepare for upcoming changes
- providers who have not yet applied and want to learn more.

[Register to attend an upcoming session](#).



We're processing payments

We have processed worker retention payments for the period 8 September to 5 October 2025.

We processed this payment on 31 October 2025. Please note this is the day we processed the payment, not necessarily the date you will receive funds.

We make payments at the service-level through the Child Care Subsidy System. We send payments to the same bank account as your CCS payments.

If you received a seasonal advance for care provided in December 2024 or January or February 2025, you may notice your payment has been reduced. This is part of a planned seasonal adjustment to balance funding across the year.

Please be assured we are working to process outstanding applications as quickly as possible. If your application is approved, your first payment will include backpay from the start of your grant agreement.

Learn more about [when and how we make worker retention payments](#).

Sector spotlight

The latest National Quality Framework snapshot is out now

For the fifth quarter in a row, 91% of education and care services are rated as Meeting the National Quality Standard (NQS) or above.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) Snapshot is a national report on children's education and care services operating under the NQF. It provides information on the sector and the quality ratings of services against the NQS.

As at 1 October 2025, 18,029 NQF approved children's education and care services were operating across Australia.

Read the [latest Q3 2025 NQF snapshot](#) on ACECQA's website.

Facts from FAL

Backdating child wellbeing certificates and determinations

Providers play an important role in giving families access to Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing. Here's what you need to know about backdating access to the subsidy.

- You can give families access to the child wellbeing subsidy through a [certificate](#) or a [determination](#).
- You can backdate all certificates and determinations up to 28 days. You do not need additional evidence to do this.
- You may be able to backdate up to 13 weeks in [exceptional circumstances](#). You must have evidence showing that an exceptional circumstance applies. This is in addition to the evidence you must hold demonstrating the child is at risk.

Learn more about backdating certificates and determinations in the [Guide to ACCS child wellbeing](#).

Enrolments

You must [enrol](#) children correctly so families can get CCS. You must submit enrolment notices on time.



Overpayments and debt

Sometimes, you may receive more CCS than you're entitled to. This is known as an [overpayment](#). If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to pay back the difference.



From the department

We're making Geccko more secure

Get early childhood compliance knowledge online, or Geccko, is our online learning platform for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector.

To ensure your training completions can be accurately tracked and reported correctly, all users need an individual Geccko account. Shared accounts are no longer permitted.

Action required: We have contacted all registered users with more information. Please look for your email or [login to Geccko](#) to check and update your account.

If you don't have a Geccko account, [register today](#) with a personal email address that only you can access.

Worker retention payment update

Have your say on the worker retention payment

We have commissioned an independent survey to understand how the worker retention payment is working. ORIMA Research is conducting the survey on our behalf.

Your insights will help us understand what's working and what needs improvement. The survey takes around 10 minutes. It is voluntary and confidential, and findings are reported in de-identified form.

ORIMA Research is contacting providers and services with a unique survey link this week. Keep an eye out for your email invitation from surveys@orima.com.

Complete the survey by 12 pm AEDT Monday 15 December 2025.

If you have questions about the survey, contact SPS@education.gov.au. If you need technical support, contact surveys@orima.com.

Get ready for the 15% wage increase

From 1 December 2025 you must pay eligible workers at least 15% above the relevant award rate.

We have information on our website to help you prepare for this change, including:

- the current award rates
- the new minimum hourly rate from 1 December 2025 (15% above award)
- the additional minimum hourly amount payable to all staff from 1 December 2025 (5%).

View the [worker retention payment minimum rates](#).



Sector spotlight

Direct gap fee collection starts January 2026

From 1 January 2026, Family Day Care and In Home Care providers must collect Child Care Subsidy (CCS) gap fees directly from families.

This means that educators in these services will no longer be able to [collect the gap fee](#) themselves on behalf of providers.

All gap fees must be paid by EFT (unless an exemption has been granted).

We have partnered with the following organisations to support your transition. Visit their websites for more information:

- [Direct Gap Fee Collection Resources](#) from Family Day Care Australia
- [In Home Care Direct Gap Fee Collection](#) from NSW Family Day Care Association.

Facts from FAL

Payments and fees

You must pass on CCS to families as a fee reduction. You must report [fee information](#).

Persons with management or control

A provider is a legal entity. A provider's legal obligations apply to certain people known as 'persons with management or control' or 'PMCs'. [PMCs](#) take part in the decision-making or management of the provider.



From the department

ECEC staff – we want to hear from you!

We're inviting early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff to have their say in a national survey. Help us better understand the views and perspectives of the ECEC workforce!

The findings will inform national policies to support the ECEC workforce. It will give us a better picture of:

- staff wellbeing and satisfaction with employment conditions and workplace culture
- staff views on working in the sector
- factors impacting attraction and retention in the ECEC sector.

The survey is for directors, managers, coordinators, educational leaders, teachers and educators.

The survey is quick and confidential. It takes less than 10 minutes, is voluntary, and results are reported in de-identified form.

You can also enter the draw to win one of 50 \$200 vouchers.

ORIMA Research is conducting this survey on our behalf. Keep your eye out for an email invitation from surveys@orima.com.

Please share information about the survey with your staff and encourage them to complete it. Visit the [survey portal](#) to access an email, poster and flyer to distribute at your service.

The survey closes on Monday 15 December 2025.

First Nations partnership recognised at IPAA Awards

The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership Co-Secretariat, a partnership between the Department of Education and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, was recognised as a finalist in the Collaboration category at the [2025 IPAA ACT Spirit of Service Awards](#).

The recognition highlights the Policy Partnership's commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through genuine partnership and shared decision-making.

Learn more about the [Policy Partnership](#).

Sector spotlight

Provide feedback on the NQA IT system

A survey on your experiences using the National Quality Agenda (NQA) IT system is open from tomorrow.

Your feedback will help ACECQA to update [Help Centre articles](#) and guide future system enhancements.

The survey will take less than 10 minutes.



All registered users will be sent a survey link via email on 30 October. The survey is open until 1 December 2025.

If you are a registered user and do not receive the email invitation, please check your spam folder. If it's not there, please contact nqaits.support@acecqa.gov.au for support.

Facts from FAL

Financial reporting deadline for some large providers is this Saturday

Large providers must report financial information, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements, to the department.

If you do your financial reporting on the financial year, the deadline is this Saturday.

Complete [2024–25 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by 1 November 2025.

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

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

Infringements

We can issue [infringement notices](#), or fines, to providers that don't follow the rules under Family Assistance Law.

Absences

You must report when a child was absent and the family was charged. You must report [absences](#) in session reports.

Workforce support

Professional development subsidy offers

Did you apply for a professional development or paid practicum subsidy? We've notified applicants of their outcomes.

Successful applicants will receive an email with a letter of offer. Please respond accordingly. Payments are expected to be made in late-November 2025.

Those who were unsuccessful in this round have also been informed. Due to a high volume of applications, we have prioritised applications from certain groups.

We appreciate the time and effort invested by all who applied. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to strengthening the skills and experience of your staff.

Keep an eye on our website for [information about future rounds](#).



From the department

Thank you for shaping our communications

Our annual communication survey has now closed. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Your feedback helps us improve how we connect with you about early childhood education and care (ECEC) policies and programs.

Worker retention payment update

Tell your community you've signed up

Has your service been approved for the worker retention payment? Let your community know.

Find the following materials in our [worker retention payment communication toolkit](#):

- a self-print poster to display at your service
- a badge to display on your website or printed materials
- social media tiles.

You may use the materials once you've been approved and entered into a grant agreement.

Sector spotlight

National child safety training website now live

On 22 August 2025, all Education Ministers agreed to implement national mandatory child safety training for all ECEC staff, volunteers and students.

You can find out the latest information on the new [National Child Safety Training website](#).

The training aims to strengthen child safety across the ECEC sector. Training will be nationally consistent and evidence-informed to help staff:

- understand their responsibilities
- recognise and respond to concerns
- embed child-safe practices in everyday work.

The training will be mandatory and free for all staff, volunteers, and students from early 2026. Wage subsidy grants will be available for small to medium providers from 1 July 2026.

The project is led by the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) on behalf of the Queensland Department of Education and all state, territory, and federal governments.

We will provide further updates in this newsletter as the project progresses.



Best practice framework for early childhood intervention now available

Are you working with children aged up to 9 years with developmental concerns, delay or disability? The National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention is now available.

The Framework explains the principles and goals behind effective early childhood intervention. It can help you understand:

- how to deliver best-practice support for children and their families
- the principles underpinning early childhood intervention practice
- evidence-bases for decision-making.

View the Framework and resources on the [Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website](#).

Cyber security webinar for small businesses

Join the [National Office of Cyber Security](#) for a virtual webinar on cyber security for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The 'Simple Steps – Safer Business' webinar will take place from 3–4 pm AEDT on Monday 27 October 2025.

The session will:

- identify scams impacting small business
- showcase top tips to address cyber risks
- tell you what to do if you have been targeted.

Representatives from Cyber Wardens and Scamwatch will present during the session.

[Register for the webinar](#) on Humanitix.

Facts from FAL

When we impose conditions on your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approval

If you don't comply with your obligations or treat regulatory risk, we can impose additional conditions on your approval.

We can impose conditions:

- at the time of approval
- following compliance audits, investigations and reviews.

Providers with additional conditions imposed must comply with them. A breach could result in further enforcement action.

Conditions will be:

- proportional to the level of non-compliance or regulatory risk identified
- clear, unambiguous and reasonable
- either ongoing or have an end date.

We may publish conditions we've imposed on providers on the [enforcement action register](#).



We can impose any additional condition which will support the provider's compliance with the Family Assistance Law (FAL).

Examples of conditions imposed include, but are not limited to:

- placing limits on educators engaged and providing family day care
- requiring persons with management or control to complete Geccko training
- requiring a provider to supply particular documents, such as a statement of tax record
- conditions to address quality and safety risks in a specified timeframe
- preventing expansion by refusing applications for new services.

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

Working with children checks

A [working with children check](#) is a safeguard to protect the health and safety of children. Under FAL, ECEC providers have specific obligations regarding working with children checks.

Session reports

You must submit accurate and complete [session reports](#). You must submit them on time.

Workforce support

Partnering with families to provide early support

Join Be You for an online event on how educators can partner with families to provide early support.

This event will discuss strategies for having conversations with families about children's wellbeing based on educators' observations.

The session will take place online at 2 pm AEDT on 30 October 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)



Help shape how we communicate with you

Last chance to have your say

We're always working to make our communications more useful and relevant for you. Whether you're a regular reader or just drop in occasionally, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

Tell us what you think about:

- our website
- this weekly newsletter
- our Facebook group
- our explainer videos
- Geccko – our online learning platform
- the CCS Provider Helpdesk.

The survey takes less than 10 minutes. It's anonymous, and we don't collect personal data.

If you work in early childhood education and care (ECEC), your voice matters. Share the survey with your colleagues – every response helps us improve how we communicate with you.

[Have your say now](#)

From the department

On-site spot checks for the early childhood sector to start

From October 2025, we will start a pilot to conduct unannounced spot checks on ECE services.

Spot checks will be conducted at 40–45 services across regional and urban areas, including in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and Western Australia.

This action comes after new legislation passed parliament on 31 July. The laws give the department new powers of entry to:

- identify Child Care Subsidy (CCS) compliance issues
- report any observed quality and safety concerns to local regulators.

We know that the vast majority of the sector cares deeply about the safety and quality of ECEC. Site visits and spot checks are not about shutting centres down. They are about lifting standards up.

For more information on spot checks:

- read our announcement about [on-site spot checks for the early childhood sector to start](#)
- visit [spot checks](#) on our website.

The following resources can help you check and improve compliance, quality and safety:

- [strengthening safety through Child Care Subsidy](#) on our website



- [Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority website](#) for information on the National Quality Framework and quality and safety standards
- reach out to your [local regulator](#).

Changes to early childhood education and care legislation

The Australian Government has introduced legislation for the ECEC sector.

The proposed changes make the legislation clearer, promote transparency, and remove ambiguity.

Gathering information about the cost of delivering ECEC

The changes allow us to require providers to share information about how much it costs to deliver ECEC. This will support the [Early Education Service Delivery Prices project](#).

Sharing and disclosing information collected under Family Assistance Law

The changes mean we can share and disclose information about providers and services that we collect under Family Assistance Law (FAL) if it is already publicly available. This includes information available from public sources like ASIC or ABN registers. It means we can use public data to collaborate with the public, private and research sectors. This does not change the strong protections in place for information about children and parents.

Technical amendments to remove inconsistencies

These include:

- a change to align the date of effect of certain CCS eligibility and entitlement decisions with the Child Care Subsidy System
- two minor technical amendments to improve consistency by refining previous legislative changes.

These amendments have little to no impact on providers, services or families.

The changes are subject to the passage of legislation.

Read the announcement about [changes to ECEC legislation](#).

Worker retention payment update

Minimum rates from 1 December 2025 now available

From 1 December 2025, you must pay eligible workers at least 15% above the relevant award rate.

We've updated the minimum rates on our website to help you prepare for this change.

The rates include:

- the current award minimum hourly rate
- the new minimum hourly rate from 1 December 2025 (15% above award)
- the additional minimum hourly amount you may need to add.

What you can do now:

- review the updated rates so you're ready for the change
- plan your wage increases ahead of December



- remember: all funding must be used for wages or eligible on-costs.

Visit our website to [view the updated rates](#).

Tell your community you've signed up

Has your service been approved for the worker retention payment? Let your community know.

Find the following materials in our [worker retention payment communication toolkit](#):

- a self-print poster to display at your service
- a badge to display on your website or printed materials
- social media tiles.

You may use the materials once you've been approved and entered into a grant agreement.

Changes to the activity test from January 2026

From 5 January 2026, all CCS eligible families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised care per fortnight. These changes are known as the 3 Day Guarantee.

Families can get 100 hours of subsidised child care each fortnight for each child if they:

- are caring for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child
- have more than 48 hours each fortnight of recognised participation
- have an exemption or experience exceptional circumstances, or
- receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing, temporary financial hardship or grandparent payments.

Families must still pay a gap fee, except in certain circumstances.

Families are not guaranteed a place with a provider. Families will still need to secure a place with their chosen child care service.

Families who want to get more than 72 hours will need to report their recognised participation to Services Australia.

Find out more about the [3 Day Guarantee](#) on our website.

Consultation on Disability Standards

We're seeking views on the Disability Standards for Education.

The standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers and the rights of people with disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

The standards are reviewed every 5 years to ensure they remain effective. In the 2025 review, we are seeking views on 3 main topics:

- effective implementation of the standards
- inclusive decision-making
- clear responsibilities for assessment authorities and course developers.



Submissions are now open. Find more information, including how to submit your feedback, on the [consultation website](#).

More information on how the standards are being changed to include ECEC services is available at [consultation on changes to the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#).

Sector spotlight

Building mental health awareness

Join Be You this Mental Health Month for an online event on how educators can positively influence children's mental health.

This event will discuss how services can support educators to promote mental health and wellbeing within the boundaries of their roles.

The session will take place online at 4:30 pm AEDT on 21 October 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)

Check your hourly fees on StartingBlocks.gov.au

Following recent enhancements, [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) now displays hourly fees.

This change helps families make informed choices, but it's also revealed that some services have incorrect fee information.

What you need to do:

- check your fees on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#)
- if your fees are not correct, update them in the Child Care Subsidy System via the Provider Entry Point or your third-party software
- allow 24 to 48 hours for the changes to appear.

If you are unable to make changes, ask an authorised person to email the CCS Provider Helpdesk with:

- the correct fee
- the date the fee applies from
- the subject line: Hourly fee update.

See instructions on [how to update fee and vacancy information](#).

Facts from FAL

Financial reporting deadline for some large providers is 1 November

Large providers must report financial information to the department each year, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that currently, or plans to operate or share operation of, 25 or more services.



If you do your financial reporting on the financial year, the deadline is on **1 November 2025**.

Complete the [2024–25 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by the deadline.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. Please make sure that you include financial statements and the information that is required in the important information tab.

Learn more about [financial reporting obligations for large providers](#).

Enrolments

You must [enrol children](#) correctly so families can get CCS. You must submit enrolment notices on time.

Provider approvals

You must be [approved to operate an ECEC service](#) and administer CCS.



Help shape how we communicate with you

Got feedback for us?

Do you read this newsletter each week? If you have ideas for how we could make it better, now is the time to tell us.

Take our quick communication survey to share your thoughts. It takes less than 10 minutes, is anonymous, and open to everyone working in ECEC.

[Have your say now](#)

From the department

Next steps for the Building Early Education Fund

The Australian Government is moving ahead with the Building Early Education Fund. The Building Fund is a \$1 billion investment to build and grow early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in areas of need.

The Building Fund includes \$500 million to build and expand ECEC services. This funding will be targeted to areas of greatest need and will roll out across several priority streams.

We will provide **capital funding to states and territories** to build or expand ECEC services on, or near, school sites.

Sector grants will be available to build or expand ECEC services in areas of need. This will include:

- a large-scale grant round for large not-for-profit providers
- a grant round for smaller providers and in-venue Family Day Care providers.

We are talking to large not-for-profit providers now to help shape a future grants program. We want to understand their capacity to build and run several new services. This will help us design grants that go to providers with a strong track record and the ability to deliver high-quality services at scale.

In partnership with the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children, we will establish **Integrated Early Years Hubs** that bring together early learning, child and maternal health, and family and community supports in one place.

These actions are part of the government's \$1 billion plan to support early education. The goal is to build a universal ECEC system that gives more children the best start in life.

Learn more about the [Building Early Education Fund](#).

New Community Child Care Fund grant round opening in early 2026

A new Community Child Care Fund grant round will open in early 2026.

The sustainability and capital support grant provides funding to services in areas experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability to stay open.



Grants will be available for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved providers who operate services:

- in identified priority areas and regional, remote or very remote areas, or
- that offer specialised care to families experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability.

Providers will be able to apply for 2 streams of funding:

- sustainability support – for activities that improve financial viability
- capital support – for minor works to improve existing facilities.

Grants will provide up to 3 years of funding for eligible services.

More information, including the grant guidelines, will be available soon. [Subscribe to our newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#) to get the latest updates.

Worker retention payment update

Annual declaration due Friday

The deadline to submit your 2024–25 annual declaration form is 10 October 2025.

If you received regular payments before 30 June 2025, your annual declaration must be submitted by this date. Log into the [grants portal](#) to complete the form and meet your reporting requirements.

If you received your first payment after 30 June 2025, you don't need to report until August 2026.

Learn more and see our tips for [completing the annual declaration](#).

We're processing payments

We have processed worker retention payments for the period 11 August to 7 September 2025.

We processed this payment on 3 October 2025. Please note this is the day we processed the payment, not necessarily the date you will receive funds.

We make payments at the service-level through the Child Care Subsidy System. We send payments to the same bank account as your CCS payments.

If you received a seasonal advance for care provided in December, January or February, you may notice your payment has been reduced. This is part of a planned seasonal adjustment to balance funding across the year.

Please be assured we are working to process outstanding applications as quickly as possible. If your application is approved, your first payment will include backpay from the start of your grant agreement.

Learn more about [when and how we make worker retention payments](#).

Sector spotlight

Have your say on National Child Safety Training

The Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) is developing nationally consistent child safety training for the ECEC sector, in partnership with the Queensland Department of Education and other governments.



Educators, volunteers, managers and leaders are invited to complete a 20-minute survey to help shape the mandatory training.

Visit the [ACCP website](#).

Facts from FAL

Caring for extended family in Family Day Care

If you work in Family Day Care (FDC), there are rules you must follow when caring for extended family members.

Extended family members include a FDC educator's or their partner's:

- niece/nephew
- cousin
- grandchild, or
- great-grandchild.

You may be able to report CCS eligible sessions when FDC educators are caring for extended family members, but you must follow the 'less than 50% rule'.

Find out how to calculate the less than 50% rule, watch a video and read more about [providing care for relatives](#).

ACCS child wellbeing approved program list

We've published the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing approved program list.

Families engaged in these approved programs are eligible to apply for ACCS child wellbeing.

The approved programs are:

- funded by state and territory child safety departments
- designed to support families identified as being at high risk of entering or escalating within the child protection system or outside it.

Learn more about the [approved program list](#) on our website.

Payments and fees

You must pass on CCS to families as a fee reduction. You must report [fee information](#).

Advertising your service

You can only offer certain types of [inducements](#) to secure a child's enrolment.



Share with families

Child Dental Benefits Schedule

The Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) funds basic dental services for eligible children.

You don't need to apply or register for the CDBS. If your child is eligible, you will automatically receive a letter in the post or through [myGov](#). Services can be provided in a public or private dental clinic.

You can check to see if your child is eligible for the CDBS this year by:

- checking your Medicare online account through myGov
- calling Medicare on 132 011.

For more information on the CDBS visit the [Services Australia website](#).



Help shape how we communicate with you

We read every comment

We read every comment and use your insights to understand what's working and where we can improve. Your responses will be anonymous, and we don't collect any personal data.

[Have your say now](#)

From the department

Worker retention payment update

Backdating deadline has passed

The deadline to apply for backdated worker retention payments has now passed.

If you applied by 30 September 2025 and haven't yet received a grant agreement, you don't need to do anything. We're processing applications and will contact you soon. If eligible for backdating, the additional funds will be included in your first payment.

Applications for the worker retention payment remain open. If you haven't applied yet, you can still do so to access future payments.

Visit our [application guide](#) for step-by-step instructions.

Tell your community you've signed up

Has your service been approved for the worker retention payment? Let your community know.

Find the following materials in our [worker retention payment communication toolkit](#):

- a self-print poster to display at your service
- a badge to display on your website or printed materials
- social media tiles.

You may use the materials once you've been approved and entered into a grant agreement.

Changes to Child Care Subsidy eligibility from January 2026

From 5 January 2026, all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligible families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised care per fortnight. These changes are known as the 3 Day Guarantee.

Families can get 100 hours of subsidised child care each fortnight for each child if they:

- are caring for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child
- have more than 48 hours each fortnight of recognised participation



- have an exemption or experience exceptional circumstances
- receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing, temporary financial hardship or grandparent payments.

Families must still pay a gap fee, except in certain circumstances.

Families who want to get more than 72 hours will need to report their recognised participation to Services Australia.

Find out more about the [3 Day Guarantee](#) on our website.

Inclusion Support Program changes

Two important changes to the [Inclusion Support Program](#) (ISP) take effect today.

Deloitte is the new Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM)

From today, Deloitte will:

- assess funding applications from early childhood education and care (ECEC) services
- recommend outcomes to the department.

You can now visit the [new IDFM website](#). Deloitte will retain the current toll-free IDFM phone number: 1800 824 955.

Updated guidelines released

We have updated the ISP Guidelines. These updates:

- make it easier for you to understand and apply the program
- do not represent any policy changes
- will better support consistent, high-quality inclusion practices across the sector.

Read the [updated guidelines](#).

What does this mean for your service?

There is no change to how you access inclusion support. Service continuity remains our priority, and you can continue to access support as usual.

If you need help, please reach out to your [local Inclusion Agency](#).

CCS Provider Helpdesk closed Monday

The CCS Provider Helpdesk will be closed because of the public holiday in some states and territories on Monday 6 October.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEDT on Tuesday 7 October 2025.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.



CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Sector spotlight

National Workforce Census 2024 infographics available

The National Workforce Census (NWC) is the only national census of its type in Australia.

In 2024, we surveyed more than 18,000 ECEC services across Australia, including more than 2,000 dedicated preschools. This covers 97% of all CCS-approved services in Australia.

We've recently published infographics visualising key facts and statistics from the 2024 NWC. The infographics are available for:

- service type data
- state and territory type data.

The infographics complement the report and interactive dashboard.

Find the [infographics](#) on our website.

Facts from FAL

Financial reporting deadline for some large providers is 1 November

Large providers must report financial information, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements, to the department each year.

If you do your financial reporting on the financial year, the deadline is on 1 November 2025.

Complete the [2024-25 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by the deadline.

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

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

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

Understanding privacy obligations

You collect personal information from families when you enrol children. You share this information with us so they can get CCS.

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

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



So that families can get CCS, we need to:

- collect their personal information
- share this information with other government departments, like Services Australia.

Make sure that families understand that we cannot provide CCS without their permission for you to share their information with us.

You must also take reasonable steps to protect the personal information that you hold about families. Find [simple tips to safeguard data from breaches](#) on our website.

Read more about:

- your [privacy obligations](#)
- how we handle personal information in our [privacy policy](#).

Geccko

New Geccko course: Compliance and enforcement

Our new course on compliance and enforcement will help you understand your compliance obligations under Family Assistance Law (FAL).

The course will help you:

- explain the importance of compliance
- identify your provider responsibilities
- identify the conditions for continued approval under FAL
- explain our approach to compliance
- describe the consequences of failing to meet your obligations.

The course should take 30 minutes to complete and you can:

- login using your tablet, laptop or mobile phone
- download course certificates upon completion
- access other resources such as videos and tip sheets.

Find out more and register for [Geccko](#) to access the course.



Help shape how we communicate with you

What do you think of our channels?

Complete our 10-minute survey to help us improve how we communicate with you.

Tell us what you think about:

- [our website](#)
- [this weekly newsletter](#)
- [our Facebook group](#)
- [our explainer videos](#)
- [Geccko](#) – our online learning platform
- the CCS Provider Helpdesk.

Whether you use these often or only occasionally, your perspective is valuable.

[Have your say now](#)

From the department

New Child Care Subsidy data: June quarter 2025

We've published data about the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) in the June quarter 2025.

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

Key findings from the June quarter 2025 include:

- 1,423,900 children from 1,005,800 families used CCS-approved care
- 15,214 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 26.7 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$13.40
- the Australian Government paid \$3.86 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [June quarter 2025 report](#).

Worker retention payment

Final reminder: apply now for backdated payments

This is your final week to apply for the worker retention payment and get backdated payments.

Apply by 30 September 2025 to be considered for backdated payments.



Applications will remain open until 30 September 2026. However, we can only backdate payments for applications received by 30 September 2025.

Visit our website to:

- [find out more about the payment](#)
- [search our directory to find support that meets your needs](#)
- [read our application guide](#).

Variation request form now available

You can now access a variation request form in the [grants portal](#) to make changes to your grant agreement.

You can use the form to:

- make changes to an existing grant agreement
- apply for an alternative fee growth cap for one or more of your services, whether you already have a grant agreement or are awaiting approval.

Reminder: alternative fee growth caps are only available in **limited circumstances** where financial viability is impacted. Visit our website to learn more about [eligibility and when you can apply](#).

If you need to make changes to your worker retention payment application, email ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

Direct gap fee collection starts January 2026

From 1 January 2026, Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) providers must collect CCS gap fees directly from families.

This means that educators in these services will no longer be able to [collect the gap fee](#) themselves on behalf of providers.

All gap fees must be paid by EFT (unless an exception has been granted).

We have partnered with the following organisations to support your transition:

- Family Day Care Australia to support FDC providers
- NSW Family Day Care Association to support IHC providers.

For more information and to access resources, visit:

- [Direct Gap Fee Collection Resources](#) from Family Day Care Australia
- [In Home Care Direct Gap Fee Collection](#) from NSW Family Day Care Association.

Sector spotlight

How Be You can support quality improvement

Be You has tools and resources to support continuous quality improvement in your learning community.

Explore a new [video series](#) to discover how Be You connects with the National Quality Standard (NQS). Each video:



- links Be You with a specific Quality Area of the NQS
- offers insights about using Be You to support your quality improvement process
- features voices from the sector including experts, Be You consultants and educators.

You can use the videos to:

- spark conversations in staff meetings
- support professional learning
- guide planning
- share with families.

Learn more on the [Be You](#) website.

Facts from FAL

Understanding prescribed discounts

Prescribed discounts allow third parties or providers to contribute to the gap fee without reducing the family's CCS entitlement.

These discounts provide extra support for families. They can reduce or remove the gap fee.

This applies to:

- state and territory government third-party payments
- provider discount for early childhood workforce
- provider discount for a period of emergency.

You must include information on prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports.

Find out how to apply prescribed discounts in session reports by [reading the examples](#) on our website.

Collecting gap fees

Providers must take all reasonable steps to [collect gap fees](#) from families electronically.

Absences

You must report when a child was absent and the family was charged. You must report [absences](#) in session reports.

Share with families

Have your say and help save Thriving Kids

Thriving Kids is a national initiative to improve services and support for children aged 8 and under with developmental concerns or mild to moderate disability.

Families, carers, community members and professionals can share their experiences with support services for children with disability, including developmental delay and autism.



You can participate by either:

- making a written submission by Friday 3 October 2025
- completing a short community survey by Friday 10 October 2025.

Your input will help inform the design of the Thriving Kids program.

Find out more about the [Thriving Kids Enquiry](#).



From the department

Worker retention payment update

Apply now for backdated payments

Time is running out to apply for the worker retention payment and get backdated payments.

We must receive your application by 30 September 2025 to backdate your payments.

Applications submitted after this date will be accepted but will not be eligible for backdating.

Visit our website to:

- [find out more about the payment](#)
- [search our directory to find support that meets your needs](#)
- [read our application guide](#).

Have you completed your annual declaration?

If you received regular payments before 30 June 2025, your 2024–25 annual declaration is due by 10 October 2025.

This process:

- confirms you used funding correctly
- is part of regular reporting for the worker retention payment.

Log into the [grants portal](#) to complete the form. It is only visible to providers who received regular payments before 30 June 2025. If you received your first payment after this date, you don't need to report until August 2026.

Learn more and see our tips for [completing the annual declaration](#).

Understanding the maximum cap

Under the worker retention payment, all providers are assigned a maximum cap. This is the highest amount of funding you can get over the life of the grant.

The cap is set when your grant is approved. It is based on data from the Child Care Subsidy System and includes a buffer to account for changes in service delivery.

Importantly, the cap:

- is not a guaranteed amount – your total payments may be less than the cap
- does not determine your regular payments.

Payments are made every 4 weeks in arrears and vary depending on actual hours of care provided and the time of year. Because of this, you can't simply divide the cap by 24 months to estimate each payment.



If you're nearing your cap or have a unique service offering outside the scope of the standard payment calculation, we can check your funding through the funding review process and may increase your cap if needed.

Find out more about the [maximum cap on our website](#).

Sector Spotlight

Be You early learning events

Join Be You for 2 online webinars this month to make positive changes in your learning community.

18 September 1:00 pm AEST – Making change with impact: Reflecting for continuous improvement

22 September 5:30 pm AEST – Applying a wellbeing lens to your quality improvement planning

Find out more and register for [Be You early learning events](#).

Facts from FAL

New declaration of compliance

The declaration of compliance is a simple and quick form covering key provider obligations under Family Assistance Law (FAL).

You may receive a declaration of compliance with the section 158 notice.

The declaration aims to help us identify potential compliance issues early and give providers:

- customised feedback and education
- support to stay on track with their obligations.

We will use it as part of our regular compliance monitoring. You may be asked to complete a declaration:

- as part of targeted compliance actions, or
- due to random selection.

What you need to do

If selected, you will receive a notice by email. You will have 2 weeks to respond. You will need to:

- review the information
- confirm your current provider information and details about a specific service
- declare your compliance with FAL by responding to the questions.

It's important to be accurate and honest. We will check the information you provide against session reports and other records. We can then provide clear and constructive feedback to improve your compliance.

We may take [compliance action](#) if we identify you have failed to meet your obligations.

Find out more about the [declaration of compliance](#).



Financial reporting deadline for some large providers is 1 November

Large providers must report financial information, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements, to the department each year.

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

If you do your financial reporting on the financial year, the deadline is on 1 November 2025.

Complete the [2024-25 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by the deadline.

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

If you report on a calendar year your deadline will be 1 May 2026. We'll provide more information about what you need to do closer to the deadline.

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

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

Workforce Support

Professional development subsidies close Friday

Applications for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies will close on 19 September.

This is your last chance to secure funding to help build your team's skills and experience. If you would like to be considered for a subsidy:

- ensure all required information is accurate and complete
- submit your application by 5 pm AEST on 19 September 2025.

Due to high volume of applications, we will prioritise applications for:

- First Nations educators
- educators from regional and remote locations.

We will also further prioritise these applications based on:

- provider size
- qualifications (paid practicum subsidy).
- training type (professional development subsidy).

While all applications are welcome, we will prioritise applications within these groups until funding is exhausted.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Practicum exchange living allowance closes Friday

Final chance to apply the practicum exchange living and travel allowance.



We're supporting up to 100 educators who need to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area with a living and travel allowance. The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. We pay the allowance to providers who must pass it on to educators in full. Applications close 19 September 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

New for families

Changes to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test

From January 2026, the activity test is being replaced so all CCS eligible families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised child care each fortnight.

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



From the department

Worker retention payment update

Final weeks to apply for backdated payments

There are only a few weeks left to apply for the worker retention payment and get backdated payments.

We'll backdate payments if you:

- apply by 30 September 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

If you miss the deadline, you may not be eligible for backdated payments, so we encourage all eligible workers to submit their applications as soon as possible.

We'll backdate payments to:

- 2 December 2024, for workplace instruments that cover the full grant period even if adopted later
- the date your workplace instrument starts, if this is after 2 December 2024.

If you have questions about eligibility, payment timelines, or how backdating works, our resources and support channels are available to help guide you through the process.

Visit our website to:

- [find out more about the payment](#)
- [search our directory to find support that meets your needs](#)
- [read our application guide.](#)

We're processing payments

We have processed worker retention payments for the period 14 July to 10 August 2025.

We processed this payment on 8 September 2025. Please note this is the day we processed the payment, not necessarily the date you will receive funds.

We make payments at the service-level through the Child Care Subsidy System. We send payments to the same bank account as your CCS payments.

If you received a seasonal advance for care provided in December, January or February, you may notice your payment has been reduced. This is part of a planned seasonal adjustment to balance funding across the year.

Please be assured we are working to process outstanding applications as quickly as possible. If your application is approved, your first payment will include backpay from the start of your grant agreement.

Learn more about [when and how we make payments](#) on our website.



Facts from FAL

Making a reasonable estimate when reporting prescribed discounts

You may need to make a reasonable estimate when reporting some prescribed discounts.

This includes for:

- a family's first session report
- state and territory preschool payments.

Family's first session report

A family's CCS entitlement is only determined after the initial session report is processed. If you are submitting the first session report, you may not know the family's gap fee.

If you know a child is eligible for a prescribed discount, enter a nominal amount of \$0.01 when reporting the prescribed discount amount in the session report.

State and territory preschool payments

Each state and territory decides how they pay prescribed preschool payments to providers. Read examples for the 3 main payments types and [how to estimate the discount](#).

Read more about [making a reasonable estimate](#).

Overpayments and debt

Sometimes, you may receive more CCS than you're entitled to. This is known as an [overpayment](#). If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to pay back the difference.

Enrolments

You must [enrol](#) children correctly so families can get CCS. You must submit enrolment notices on time.

Workforce support

Professional development subsidies closing soon

Apply for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies before applications close on 19 September 2025.

There's still time to apply for:

- a professional development subsidy to cover one day of training for eligible staff
- a paid practicum subsidy to give staff paid leave while they undertake a practicum.

If you're considering applying, be aware that demand for these subsidies is high and timely submission is important.

Due to a high volume of applications, we will prioritise applications for:



- First Nations educators
- educators from regional and remote locations.

If you have already submitted an application, we appreciate your patience as we process the current round of requests.

We will also further prioritise these applications based on:

- provider size
- qualifications (paid practicum subsidy)
- training type (professional development subsidy).

While all applications are welcome, we will prioritise applications within these groups until funding is exhausted.

We pay the subsidies to providers. Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from a subsidy, please talk to your provider.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Practicum exchange living allowance closes next week

Applications for the practicum exchange living allowance are closing soon.

Apply now for an allowance to support educators to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area other than their home location. The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. We pay the allowance to providers who must pass it on to educators in full. Applications close 19 September 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

Be You professional learning

Are you or your educators wanting to learn more about how to support children's mental health and wellbeing, but struggle to find the time?

Be You's [free online learning modules](#) are designed to help you develop your skills, knowledge and confidence. The modules:

- are aligned with the National Quality Framework
- support a whole learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Don't forget – providers can currently apply for our [professional development subsidy](#) to support staff to complete training that adds to their skills. Applications close 19 September 2025.



From the department

Delivering early childhood education and care in Kununurra

We are proud to announce the opening of a new early childhood education and care (ECEC) service in Kununurra Western Australia, supported by the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) restricted program.

The One Tree Wunan Garndim-banjelng Badang Yarrawoo Menewoolbtha service opened on 21 July 2025, marking a significant milestone for the community. To celebrate this achievement, an official launch of the service was held on 27 August 2025, bringing together the community and those involved in establishing this service to commemorate its successful opening. It is providing high-quality, culturally safe ECEC for up to 38 local children in the community.

The opening follows more than 2 years of dedicated community effort:

- led by the Wunan Foundation and One Tree Community Services
- supported by the Department of Education and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children.

The service's name reflects community consultation and means 'Growing strong roots for strong futures'.

We funded the service in 2023 as part of an almost \$30 million expansion of the CCCF restricted grant.

SNAICC is the community partner for services set up under the grant, supporting the establishment and implementation of community-led and culturally safe ECEC.

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

Worker retention payment update

In this week's update we:

- take a closer look at the payment to help you determine whether your service may benefit from applying
- highlight several deadlines over the coming months.

Unsure whether to apply?

The Fair Work Commission has proposed a wage increase for workers under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, as part of its [gender-based undervaluation priority awards review](#). A final decision is expected soon.

The [worker retention payment](#) will cover the initial proposed increase. Providers who have already signed up have received a funding commitment:

- between \$254,000 and \$499,000 per service for a typical Centre Based Day Care
- between \$35,000 and \$105,000 per service for a typical Outside School Hours Care.

It's not too late to apply, and you could be eligible for back-pay.

Apply by 30 September for backdated payments

Apply by **30 September 2025** to be considered for payments backdated to 2 December 2024. This could look like:



- between \$81,000 and \$158,000 per service in back-pay for a typical Centre Based Day Care
- between \$11,000 and \$33,000 per service in back-pay for a typical Outside School Hours Care.

See our [application guide](#) for help applying. Our data shows 30% of applications take less than 2 hours to complete.

You can also [search our directory](#) to get extra support. This support is free and does not require membership.

Complete your annual declaration by **10 October**

The 2024–25 annual declaration form is due for **some providers** by **10 October 2025**. You only need to report if you received payments before 30 June 2025.

See our tips for [completing the declaration](#).

Request a funding review by **31 December** for backdated top up payments

If your situation doesn't fit the standard payment calculation, you may [request a funding review](#).

Request a funding review by **31 December 2025** to be considered for top up payments backdated to the date you became eligible for the worker retention payment.

You may still request a funding review after this date, but top up payments will only be backdated to the start of the previous reporting period.

Please note: we have extended the funding review backdating deadline from 31 October to 31 December 2025. This deadline is separate from the standard worker retention payment backdating deadline of 30 September 2025.

Sector spotlight

Early Childhood Educators' Day

Thank you, educators!

Today, on Early Childhood Educators' Day, let's celebrate our ECEC educators.

Early Childhood Educators' Day is a national community event that recognises and celebrates the work of Australia's educators in ECEC. Educators play a key role in improving children's wellbeing, learning and development.

Thank you, educators, for the important work you do. We encourage all providers to get involved and show your appreciation.

You can find ideas and resources to get involved on the [Early Childhood Educators' Day website](#).

New regulatory changes take effect

From 1 September 2025, new requirements to keep children safe came into effect.

The new requirements are in response to the [review of child safety arrangements](#).

The new requirements relate to:

- policies and procedures about safe use of digital technologies (including CCTV)
- reporting incidents or allegations of physical or sexual abuse within 24 hours



- ensuring service environments are free from vaping substances and vaping devices.

The changes are to the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Read more about the changes in the [ACECQA information sheet](#).

From 1 January 2026, refinements to the National Quality Standard will sharpen the focus on child safety in Quality Areas 2 and 7.

For more information, visit [ACECQA's website](#).

More transparency for families on StartingBlocks.gov.au

StartingBlocks.gov.au has new features to help families make informed choices about early childhood education and care. These updates support transparency, trust and ease of access to information.

Families can now see compliance and regulatory information, including:

- the date the local regulator last visited a service
- conditions placed on a provider or service by the regulator
- a clearer link between a service and their provider.

These changes are part of a broader national commitment to [improving quality and safety in ECEC](#).

You don't need to take any action for the compliance and regulatory information to appear – it will be provided by your regulatory authority.

Families can also:

- use a new guided service finder to explore different care types, understand quality ratings, and calculate subsidies
- compare service's quality rating, fees, vacancies, and inclusions side-by-side
- create, save and share shortlists of services.

Make sure that all your service details, such as fees, vacancies and inclusions, are up to date. You can update these details via the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

If you have issues updating your details, email the CCS Provider Helpdesk with:

- your service ID
- relevant screenshots
- the subject line: StartingBlocks.gov.au details.

Facts from FAL

Improve your understanding of FAL with Geccko

Geccko is our online learning platform with free courses, videos and tip sheets to help you comply with Family Assistance Law (FAL).

We recently refreshed the Geccko homepage with new and improved features like:



- easy access to the lists of courses and mini learning courses
- a change log with details of updated courses
- navigation to your latest activities and enrolments.

Most courses on Geccko take 20 minutes or less to complete.

Take this opportunity to visit our new [Geccko homepage](#).

Workforce support

Final weeks to apply for professional development subsidies

There are just 2 weeks left to apply for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies, and we are receiving a high volume of applications.

As such, we will prioritise applications for:

- First Nations educators
- educators from regional and remote locations.

We will also further prioritise these applications based on:

- provider size
- qualifications (paid practicum subsidy)
- training type (professional development subsidy).

While all applications are welcome, we will prioritise applications within each of these groups until funding is exhausted. Please submit your application as soon as possible to be considered.

Don't miss this opportunity to:

- invest in your team's skills and experience without disrupting ratios
- provide paid leave for staff to undertake practicums.

Applications close on 19 September 2025. Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from a subsidy, please talk to your provider.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Practicum exchange living allowance closing soon

There's still time to apply for the practicum exchange living and travel allowance.

Educators who use the [practicum exchange network](#) to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area can get a living and travel allowance.

The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

Applications close 19 September 2025. Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. We pay the allowance to providers who must pass it on to educators in full.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).



Celebrate Early Childhood Educators' Day with Be You

Join Be You for an In Practice webinar on valuing and appreciating educator teams all year round.

This event will discuss how services can embed a meaningful approach to valuing educators and contribute to educator wellbeing and workforce sustainability.

The session will take place online at 12 pm AEST on 5 September 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)



From the department

Supporting safety in early childhood education and care

We're committed to helping early childhood education and care (ECEC) services deliver safe, high-quality experiences for children and families.

As part of this, we're addressing long-standing concerns about services that have not met the National Quality Standards (NQS).

We've reached out to a small number of services that have consistently fallen short of key quality and safety benchmarks.

Services that do not meet the required standards may face compliance actions, including:

- [suspension](#) or [cancellation](#) of their Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approval
- additional [conditions](#) placed on their CCS approval.

We've updated the [enforcement action register](#). Further updates will be added progressively. These work marks the start of a broader effort to ensure that all services are prioritising child safety and quality.

We encourage you to:

- review your current NQS rating
- engage with [your regulator](#) to understand areas for improvement
- access resources and guidance available through the [ACECQA website](#).

We know most providers and educators are doing the right thing. This work supports those who uphold high standards and helps rebuild public confidence in the sector.

Our goal is to work with you to build a stronger, more transparent ECEC system – one where every child thrives.

Worker retention payment update

Application deadline is approaching

Apply for the worker retention payment by 30 September 2025 to be eligible for payments backdated to the start of the grant.

Applications will remain open, but applications submitted after this time will not be eligible for backpay.

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the payment. [Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Support is free, and you do not need to be a member to access support.



Sector spotlight

Joint action from special Education Ministers Meeting

On 22 August 2025, Education Ministers came together to agree on joint action to strengthen the safety and quality ECEC across Australia.

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every child in ECEC is a shared national priority. Together, we are building a system where safety is embedded in every aspect of ECEC through:

- robust regulation
- aligned decision-making
- a deep commitment to safeguarding children.

The vast majority of educators are professionals doing the right thing while educating and caring for our youngest Australians. While the NQF provides a strong and effective foundation for ECEC, ongoing efforts are essential to further strengthen safeguards that ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child.

Find out more about the [national actions](#) governments are taking to build a safer early learning system – where every decision puts children first.

Outcome on public consultation for the Child Safety Review

Following the public consultation process for the national Child Safety Review, the Decision Regulation Impact Statement (DRIS) was released on 22 August 2025.

The DRIS:

- was informed by public consultation
- analyses the impacts of recommendations from the Child Safety Review
- provides an agreed set of reforms based on the analysis.

The set of proposed reforms put to the Education Ministers include improving:

- safe use of digital devices
- mandating child safety training
- improved regulation of educator and staff conduct
- Working with Children Checks (WWCC) requirements in ECEC
- the safety of the physical service environment.

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

Read more about the [Child Safety Review](#) on ACECQA's website.

Facts from FAL

Persons with management or control

A provider is a legal entity. A provider's legal obligations apply to certain people known as 'persons with management or control' or 'PMCs'. [PMCs](#) take part in the decision-making or management of the provider.



Record keeping

You must [keep records](#) for set timeframes and tell us their location in certain circumstances.

Workforce support

Application tips: professional development subsidies

See our tips to maximise your chances of a successful professional development or paid practicum subsidy application.

1. Prepare documentation early

Have staff qualifications, employment details, training plans and practicum schedules ready before starting your application.

2. Plan practicum schedules

For the paid practicum subsidy, work with eligible staff to establish practicum dates and durations. Remember that the subsidy must be used to undertake a practicum that starts between 30 June 2025 and 28 June 2026.

3. Be specific about training needs

For the professional development subsidy, you must outline the type of training that your staff will undertake. This can be mandatory training or highly recommended training. Remember, you cannot apply for a professional development subsidy for staff who received the funding in the 2024–25 financial year.

4. Apply early

Late submissions will not be accepted. If we receive a high volume of applications, we will prioritise applications from First Nations educators and those from regional and remote locations first. We will also only open the second round of applications if funding is available after the first round.

Avoid these common mistakes:

- submitting an incomplete application
- applying on behalf of ineligible staff
- applying for ineligible activities.

The best way to increase your chances of a successful application is to ensure all required information is accurate and complete.

Applications close on 19 September 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Apply for the practicum exchange living allowance

There is one month left to apply for the practicum exchange living and travel allowance.

Practicum exchanges can be challenging for student educators in regional and remote areas with few or no other services nearby.



We're supporting up to 100 educators who need to complete a practicum with a living and travel allowance. The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. If you need to complete a practicum and think you would benefit from this allowance, talk to your provider about applying.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

Reporting on the workforce discount

You can offer discounted care to some employees without reducing their CCS.

The workforce discount:

- is an optional incentive to help you attract and retain qualified staff
- is a [prescribed discount](#)
- is applied after CCS calculation
- will not reduce a family's CCS entitlement
- requires the employee to pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

You must now include the workforce discount on your session reports.

We have guidance and examples on our website to help you understand [your obligations when offering discounted care](#).

News for families

Track the progress of your Child Care Subsidy balancing online

Services Australia will start balancing your CCS from August when they get all the information they need from your child care provider.

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



From the department

Inclusion Development Fund Manager from 1 October 2025

From 1 October 2025 Deloitte will be the [Inclusion Development Fund Manager](#) (IDFM).

As fund manager, Deloitte will:

- assess funding applications from ECEC services
- recommend outcomes to the department
- communicate outcomes to applicants.

Deloitte was selected from a formal procurement process following a routine business decision by KU Children's Services not to continue in the IDFM role beyond the current contract period.

KU Children's Services will continue until 30 September 2025.

Service continuity is our priority. We will work closely with Deloitte and KU Children's Services to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

These changes will not affect your access to inclusion support.

Deloitte will retain the current toll free IDFM phone number: 1800 824 955.

We will provide more information throughout the transition. [Subscribe to our newsletter](#) and [join our Facebook group](#) for updates.

Worker retention payment update

We're processing payments

We have processed worker retention payments for the period 16 June to 13 July 2025.

We processed this payment on 8 August 2025. Please note this is the day we processed the payment, not necessarily the date you will receive funds.

We make payments at the service-level through the Child Care Subsidy System. We send payments to the same bank account as your CCS payments.

If you received a seasonal advance in December 2024, January or February 2025, you may notice reduced payments this month. This is part of a planned seasonal adjustment to balance funding across the year.

Please be assured we are working to process outstanding applications as quickly as possible. If your application is approved, your first payment will include backpay from the start of your grant agreement.

Learn more about [when and how we make payments](#) on our website.

Annual declaration form now available

The 2024–25 annual declaration form is now available in the [grants portal](#) for some providers. The form:



- confirms you used funding correctly
- is part of regular reporting for the worker retention payment.

Who needs to complete the form

The form is only available to providers who received regular payments before 30 June 2025. If this applies to you, you must submit the form by **10 October 2025**.

If your first payment was after 30 June 2025, you don't need to report until August 2026.

What you need to report

You will be asked to report on:

- total wages and on-costs for eligible workers in 2023–24 and 2024–25
- total grant funds spent on wages and on-costs up to 30 June 2025
- other details such as workplace instrument coverage and fee increases.

Learn more and see our tips for [completing the annual declaration](#).

Horn Island to get new early childhood education and care service

The Australian Government will fund the establishment of a new early childhood education and care (ECEC) service on Horn Island in Queensland, under an almost \$30 million expansion of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) restricted program.

On 29 July 2025 we entered into a grant agreement with Kaurareg Native Title Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (KNTAC), the registered native title prescribed body corporate for the Kaurareg People.

KNTAC will renovate a block that was a former ECEC centre that has been closed for several years. The new service will provide high-quality, community-led and culturally safe ECEC to approximately 25 children on Horn Island.

To support this initiative, KNTAC will work with partners, including Astute Early Years Specialists to establish the Ngurupai Early Childhood Education and Care Service.

This is the ninth service funded under the [CCCF restricted expansion grant](#), which aims to increase participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in ECEC settings.

Sector spotlight

New regulatory changes start 1 September



From 1 September 2025, new regulatory requirements to keep children safe will come into effect for providers and their services.

The new regulatory requirements are in response to the [review of child safety arrangements](#) under the NQF.

The new requirements relate to:

- policies and procedures about safe use of digital technologies (including CCTV)
- reporting incidents or allegations of physical or sexual abuse within 24 hours
- ensuring service environments are free from vaping substances and vaping devices.

These changes to the Education and Care Services National Regulations will start on 1 September 2025. Read more about the changes in the [ACECQA information sheet](#).

From 1 January 2026, refinements to the NQS will sharpen the focus on child safety in Quality Areas 2 and 7.

For more information, visit [ACECQA's website](#).

Check your hourly fees on StartingBlocks.gov.au

Following recent enhancements, [Startingblocks.gov.au](#) now displays hourly fees.

This change helps families make informed choices, but it's also revealed that some services have incorrect fee information.

What you need to do:

- check your fees in the Child Care Subsidy System via the Provider Entry Point or your third-party software.
- if your fees are not correct, update them
- allow 24 to 48 hours for the changes to appear on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

If you are unable to make changes, ask an authorised person to email the CCS Provider Helpdesk with:

- the correct fee
- the date the fee applies from
- the subject line: Hourly fee update.

See instructions on [how to update fee and vacancy information](#).

Delivering flexible care in regional Western Australia

In Venue Care services show us how flexible and quality early learning can meet the needs of families in regional communities.

In Venue Care is a type of Family Day Care (FDC). Children are cared for by an educator at a venue other than the educator's home.

Willi Wag Tails Family Day Care runs FDC services in regional WA. Two of their In Venue Care services are located in Beverley and Northam, around 2 hours' drive from Perth.

The Beverley service operates from the local community resource centre and the Northam services operates from the town's recreation centre.

They offer:



- local access to ECEC by removing long travel distances
- understanding of the community and relationships within it
- personalised and small group approach to learning that can positively impact children
- confidence to parents returning to work, knowing their child is in a supportive environment.

Read the [case study](#) on our website.

Facts from FAL

New Geccko course: Disasters and emergencies

Learn what help is available for families and ECEC services in an emergency.

This 20 minute course will help you understand:

- when we may declare a CCS period of emergency
- support measures for families, including gap fee waivers and additional absences
- finding care for displaced children
- planning for disasters
- reporting obligations
- recovery after an emergency, including grants for services, additional subsidies for families, and other support.

Learn about [CCS periods of emergency](#) today.

Workforce support

The role of language in mental health and wellbeing

Join Be You for an In Practice webinar on the role that language plays in connecting with families on mental health and wellbeing.

This event will discuss how services can support educators to consider diverse perspectives on mental health when having conversations with families.

The session will take place online at 3:30 pm AEST on 25 August 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)



NSW floods: CCS period of emergency expanded to 5 additional areas

We've added 5 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 4 August 2025 to 11 August 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Armidale Regional Council**
- **Dungog Shire Council**
- **Port Stephens Council**
- **Singleton Council**
- **Upper Hunter Shire Council**
- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Narrabri Shire Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Uralla Shire Council
- Walcha Council.

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

For action

If you closed your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your contact details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency



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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).



From the department

CCS period of emergency in NSW

A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency was declared in parts of NSW due to the impact of flooding.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Worker retention payment update

Fee growth now capped at 4.2%

The worker retention payment fee growth cap has changed to 4.2%, down from the previous 4.4%.

The fee growth cap is an important condition of the worker retention payment. It:

- sets a limit on fee increases for providers who get the payment or want to be eligible for it in the future
- applies to all services unless we approve an alternative cap
- supports affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- ensures wage increases aren't passed on to families.

The 4.2% fee growth cap will remain in place until 7 August 2026. After this date, fees will be capped at an amount equivalent to the specified growth rate based on the [Childcare Services Cost Index](#).

We may terminate or recover payments if you breach this condition.

Learn more about the [worker retention payment](#).

How to pass on the worker retention payment

If you're receiving the worker retention payment, it's important you pass on funding to eligible workers correctly.

We've updated the information on our website to help you better understand what's required. Find out:

- how to apply the minimum rates
- what to do after the annual wage review
- how to stay compliant.

There are also examples to help you work through common scenarios.

Learn more about the [worker retention payment minimum rates](#).



Sector spotlight

New regulatory changes start 1 September



From 1 September 2025, new regulatory requirements to keep children safe will come into effect for providers and their services.

The new regulatory requirements are in response to the [review of child safety arrangements](#) under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

The new requirements relate to:

- policies and procedures about safe use of digital technologies (including CCTV)
- reporting incidents or allegations of physical or sexual abuse within 24 hours
- ensuring service environments are free from vaping substances and vaping devices.

These changes to the Education and Care Services National Regulations will start on 1 September 2025. Read more about the changes in the [ACECQA information sheet](#).

From 1 January 2026, refinements to the National Quality Standard will sharpen the focus on child safety in Quality Areas 2 and 7.

For more information, visit [ACECQA's website](#).

The latest NQF snapshot is out now

For the fourth quarter in a row, 91% of education and care services are rated Meeting NQS or above.

The NQF Snapshot is a national report on children's education and care services operating under the NQF. It provides information on the sector and the quality ratings of services against the NQS.

As of 1 July 2025, 18,018 NQF approved children's education and care services were operating across Australia.

Read the [latest Q2 2025 NQF snapshot](#) on ACECQA's website.

Facts from FAL

Absences

You must report when a child was absent and the family was charged. You must report [absences](#) in session reports.

Payments and fees

You must pass on CCS to families as a fee reduction. You must report [fee information](#).

Workforce support

Practicum exchange living allowance remains open

Don't forget – applications for the practicum exchange living allowance close on 19 September 2025.

The [practicum exchange network](#) is a dedicated website connecting ECEC services and educators in training.

Educators who use the network may be eligible for an allowance to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area. The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. If you need to complete a practicum and think you would benefit from this allowance, talk to your provider about applying.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

Understanding the professional development subsidies

Applications for the professional development subsidy and paid practicum subsidy are now open. Learn about funding amounts and the benefits for your service.

The **professional development subsidy** offers a flat daily rate to cover one day of training per eligible staff member:

- \$429.83 for early childhood teachers
- \$272.72 for early childhood educators
- \$401.72 for centre managers/directors

The **paid practicum subsidy** provides a flat weekly rate of \$1,203.10 to cover up to 8 weeks of practicum per eligible staff member.

Both subsidies are paid directly to providers.

The subsidies can help you:

- build a more qualified workforce
- improve staff retention through professional development
- maintain ratios while staff develop their skills.

Applications close on 19 September 2025.



Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Share with families

2024–25 Child Care Subsidy balancing

Services Australia will start balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2024–25 financial year soon.

Families confirm their income by:

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

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

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

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



NSW floods: CCS period of emergency declared 4 to 11 August 2025

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 4 August 2025 to 11 August 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Narrabri Shire Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Uralla Shire Council
- Walcha Council.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your contact details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

A gap fee waiver is a type of provider discount. You must report the type and amount of [prescribed discounts](#) in session reports if they have been applied for the session.

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.



Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).



From the department

Strengthening early childhood education and care regulation – legislation passes

Legislation to strengthen regulation of the early childhood education and care sector (ECEC) has passed parliament.

The changes make it clear that the government expects all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved providers and services to provide high-quality and safe care to administer the CCS.

The department will release detailed guidance to providers in the coming weeks.

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

Direct gap fee collection measure passes parliament

The Australian Government's legislation for the direct gap fee collection measure has passed through the Australian parliament.

From 1 January 2026, Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) providers must collect CCS gap fees directly from families. This means that educators in these services will no longer be able to collect the gap fee themselves on behalf of providers.

All gap fees must be paid by EFT (unless an exemption has been granted).

Read the [announcement](#).

For more information and to access resources, visit:

- [Direct Gap Fee Collection Resources](#) from Family Day Care Australia
- [In Home Care Direct Gap Fee Collection](#) from NSW Family Day Care Association.

Worker retention payment update

4.2% fee growth cap starts Friday

From 8 August 2025, the worker retention payment fee growth cap will change from 4.4% to 4.2%.

The fee growth cap is an important condition of the worker retention payment. It:

- sets a limit on fee increases for providers who get the payment or want to be eligible in the future
- applies to all services unless we approve an alternative cap
- supports affordable ECEC
- ensures wage increases aren't passed on to families.

The 4.2% fee growth cap will remain in place until 7 August 2026.



Changes coming to alternative fee growth cap application

We're streamlining the alternative fee growth cap application process.

The current application will close at 11:59 pm on 7 August 2025. A new, simpler application will launch in the week commencing 18 August 2025.

The new form will be quicker to complete and require less information – making it easier for you and faster for us to assess.

If you've already applied for an alternative cap, your application will still be assessed. You don't need to reapply.

If you urgently need to apply for an alternative cap during this period, please contact ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

Applications for the worker retention payment remain open.

Seasonal adjustments start August

Some providers will see changes to their worker retention payments from August. This is due to seasonal adjustments that balance funding across the year.

Payments are based on labour costs for charged hours of care, which vary seasonally. To support services during peak periods, we increased payments for some providers in:

- December 2024 (+10% on the base rate of funding)
- January 2025 (+15% on the base rate of funding)
- February 2025 (+5% on the base rate of funding)

We will recover these advances through reduced payments from August to October 2025.

If you received these advances, you may notice lower payments starting from the August payment through to the first October payment. We make payments every 4 weeks, with 2 scheduled in October.

This is part of a planned approach to ensure consistent support across the calendar year. Seasonal adjustments will continue for some providers, with the same pattern of adjustments commencing from December 2025.

Learn more about the [worker retention payment](#).

Sector spotlight

Inclusive Capability Project update

In June 2025, ACECQA held the first consultative workshop for developing an Inclusive Practice Framework.

The workshop brought together 34 inclusion practitioners from:

- state and territory Inclusion Agencies
- the Inclusion Development Fund Manager
- Griffith University
- Macquarie University
- Queensland University of Technology.



The session explored:

- inclusive practices across the country
- barriers to inclusion
- ideas on how to overcome these challenges.

It was the first in a series of workshops that will inform the development of the framework and supporting resources.

We engaged ACECQA earlier this year to develop the framework to:

- strengthen the capability of services to embed inclusive practices
- better support children and families experiencing barriers to access and participation.

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

Facts from FAL

New mini learning courses on Geccko

Our new Geccko mini learning courses take less than 5 minutes to complete.

There are two new mini learning courses now available on Geccko.

Advertising and inducements

This course explains the rules around advertising and inducements for early childhood education and care ECEC providers.

It will help you understand:

- what an inducement is
- what types of inducements are not allowed
- what you can offer to advertise your service.

Public holidays and CCS

This course explains the rules for reporting sessions of care for public holidays.

It will help you understand the rules around public holidays for:

- charging families
- absences
- gap fees
- recording public holidays in the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

Check out the [mini learning index](#) in Geccko today.

Submit a tip-off

If you have information related to people or child care services or providers who are not following the rules, you can report it to us anonymously. Our [CCS fraud tip-off form](#) is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to complete.



Notify us about changes

You must [notify us](#) about fees, vacancies, closures and changes to information.



From the department

Enforcement action and infringement notices registers

We've updated the enforcement action register and published a new infringement notices register.

We take enforcement action against providers and services who do not comply with Family Assistance Law (FAL). We may publish details of this action in the public interest. We've updated the register with actions recently taken against providers.

Find out more about the [enforcement action register](#).

We issue infringement notices, or fines, to providers that don't follow the rules under FAL.

We've also published a new infringement notices register with de-identified information.

Find out more about the [new infringement notices register](#).

Worker retention payment update

Fair Work Commission: gender-based undervaluation – priority awards review

On 16 April 2025, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) made a provisional decision on wages under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, in its [gender-based undervaluation – priority awards review](#).

A final decision has not yet been made.

We designed the worker retention payment to account for the outcome of this review. Specifically, if the award wages increase by less than the amount provided by the worker retention payment, the amount employers must pay above the award will reduce by the same percentage as the award increase.

For example, if the award wages go up by 6%, you will only need to pay 4% above the new award rate until 1 December 2025.

The provisional decision is **not** grounds to raise fees above the fee growth cap. The cap is 4.4% now and will drop to 4.2% from 8 August 2025.

We're monitoring the FWC review closely. We will communicate any changes to the award and how they affect the worker retention payment when these are known.

Check out our application guide

Our application guide can help you apply for the worker retention payment. You can:

- [read the guide on our website](#)
- [download a print-ready version](#)
- [access the guide in Geccko](#).

Get help

More help is available if you need it. [Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.



Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks. Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

Sector spotlight

Free webinar on play-based learning

Join the Australian Education Research Organisation for a webinar on play-based learning.

The webinar will discuss evidence-based strategies that can maximise learning opportunities for children.

The session will take place online at 11 am AEST on 19 August 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)

Facts from FAL

Learn Family Assistance Law on the go

Have you got 20 minutes to spare and want to keep up to date with your obligations under FAL?

You can complete most of our courses on Geccko in 20 minutes or less and you can access them on all devices.

Take time today to [check out our free courses](#) and ensure you're compliant with your FAL requirements.

Submit all 2024–25 session reports by this Sunday 3 August

Don't miss the cut-off date to submit all session reports for the 2024–25 financial year.

You must submit session reports in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) by 11.59 pm AEST this Sunday 3 August 2025. After this date, you will not be able to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any sessions of care between 8 July 2024 and 6 July 2025.

Access the CCSS via the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software.

Submitting your session reports by this deadline is essential so Services Australia can balance family payments.

Submitting accurate session reports on time is required under FAL. Failure to comply with your obligations may result in compliance action.

Find guidance on [submitting session reports](#) on our website.

Workforce support

ACECQA updates national workforce strategy dashboard

ACECQA has updated the dashboard on the National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy, highlighting progress toward a more sustainable ECEC workforce.



The 10-year strategy, *Shaping our Future*, outlines 21 actions across 6 focus areas:

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

The dashboard provides a clear view of progress, tracking:

- status of the 21 strategy actions
- complementary initiatives that support the 6 focus areas
- overarching evaluation indicators to measure long-term impact.

Notably, the dashboard reports that **14 of the 21 national actions are now complete**, with **6 more on track for delivery**.

Explore the dashboard on [ACECQA's website](#).

Professional development subsidy acquittals due

Providers who got a professional development or paid practicum subsidy in 2023–24 and 2024–25 must acquit their funding.

The final deadline for all acquittals is **tomorrow**.

Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

How you can benefit from professional development subsidies

Thinking about applying for one of the professional development subsidies? Here's what each subsidy can cover.

The **professional development subsidy** covers one day of training per staff member. This can include:

- mandatory training such as first aid, child protection, induction training and food handling
- highly recommended training such as additional child safety and quality training, cultural competency, inclusion training, leadership, coaching and mentoring.

You may use the subsidy to:

- cover backfilling costs while staff attend training during work hours
- pay staff a supplement for training attended outside of work hours.

The **paid practicum subsidy** provides paid leave for staff to undertake required practicums. Staff can get the subsidy twice per year (once each semester) for up to 8 weeks per semester.

Remember:

- the subsidies must directly benefit staff through training opportunities or paid leave
- only CCS approved providers can apply for the subsidies.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).



Support educators to complete regional practicums

Do you have educators completing an ECEC qualification? Check if they are eligible for support to complete a regional or remote practicum.

The practicum exchange living and travel allowance is for educators who use the [practicum exchange network](#) to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area other than their home location.

The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. We pay the allowance to providers who pass it on to educators in full.

Applications close 19 September 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).



From the department

Strengthening early childhood education and care regulation – legislation introduced

Today, the Australian Government has introduced legislation to strengthen regulation of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector.

The proposed legislation ensures quality and safety is a paramount consideration when assessing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provider approval applications and for ongoing approval.

The amendments make it clear that the Government expects all CCS-approved providers and services to be providing high quality and safe care as a condition of gaining and maintaining approval to administer the CCS.

The changes include:

- considering a provider's commitment to high-quality education and care, and a provider's quality, safety and compliance history when assessing applications for CCS provider approval or to add additional services
- taking compliance action against existing providers on quality and safety grounds, including the option to cut off access to CCS funding in the most extreme cases
- preventing providers who persistently fail to meet minimum standards and repetitively breach the National Law from opening new CCS-approved services
- publicising compliance actions taken against providers to improve transparency for families
- powers of entry to enable Australian Government authorised officers to conduct unannounced service visits and spot checks
- delegating powers to:
 - apply for monitoring warrants to appropriately qualified departmental staff
 - appoint qualified and experienced experts to conduct independent audits of large child care providers
- requiring all Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) providers to collect CCS gap fees directly from families rather than via educators (unless an exception has been granted).

The changes are subject to the passage of legislation.

[Read the announcement.](#)

Direct gap fee collection legislation introduced

The Australian Government has introduced legislation for the direct gap fee collection measure.

From 1 January 2026, Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) providers must collect CCS gap fees directly from families. This means that educators in these services will no longer be able to collect the gap fee themselves on behalf of providers. All gap fees must be paid by electronic funds transfer (unless an exemption has been granted).

Many FDC and IHC providers already directly collect CCS gap fees. We encourage remaining FDC and IHC services to begin preparing for the transition now to ensure that you are compliant once the requirement takes effect from 1 January 2026.

We have partnered with the following organisations to support your transition:



- Family Day Care Australia to support FDC providers
- NSW Family Day Care Association to support IHC providers.

This change is subject to the passage of legislation.

[Read the announcement.](#)

For more information and to access resources, visit:

- [Direct Gap Fee Collection Resources](#) from Family Day Care Australia
- [In Home Care Direct Gap Fee Collection](#) from NSW Family Day Care Association.

Reporting prescribed discounts webinar recording now available

A recording of the reporting third-party payments and prescribed provider discounts webinar is now available on our website.

From 7 July, you must report prescribed third-party payments and prescribed provider discounts in session reports.

The webinar, held on 15 July 2025, discussed changes, including:

- the kinds of payments you need to report
- the different state and territory payments that can be estimated for reporting purposes.
-

The recording of the webinar and transcript is now available on our website. [Watch the recording here.](#)

Find more information and examples of how to [report prescribed discounts in session reports](#) on our website.

Worker retention payment update

Fair Work Commission: gender-based undervaluation – priority awards review

On 16 April 2025, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) made a provisional decision on wages under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, in its [gender-based undervaluation – priority awards review](#).

A final decision has not yet been made.

We designed the worker retention payment to account for the outcome of this review. Specifically, if the award wages increase by less than the amount provided by the worker retention payment, the amount employers must pay above the award will reduce by the same percentage as the award increase.

For example, if the award wages go up by 6%, you will only need to pay 4% above the new award rate until 1 December 2025.

The provisional decision is **not** grounds to raise fees above the fee growth cap. The cap is 4.4% now and will drop to 4.2% from 8 August 2025.

We're monitoring the FWC review closely. We will communicate any changes to the award and how they affect the worker retention payment when these are known.

We're processing payments

We have processed worker retention payments for the period 19 May to 15 June 2025.

We processed this payment on 14 July 2025. Please note this is the day we processed the payment, not necessarily the date you will receive funds.

We make payments at the service-level through the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). We send payments to the same bank account as your CCS payments.

Please be assured we are working to process outstanding applications as quickly as possible. If your application is approved, your first payment will include backpay from the start of your grant agreement.

Learn more about [when and how we make payments](#) on our website.

Get help

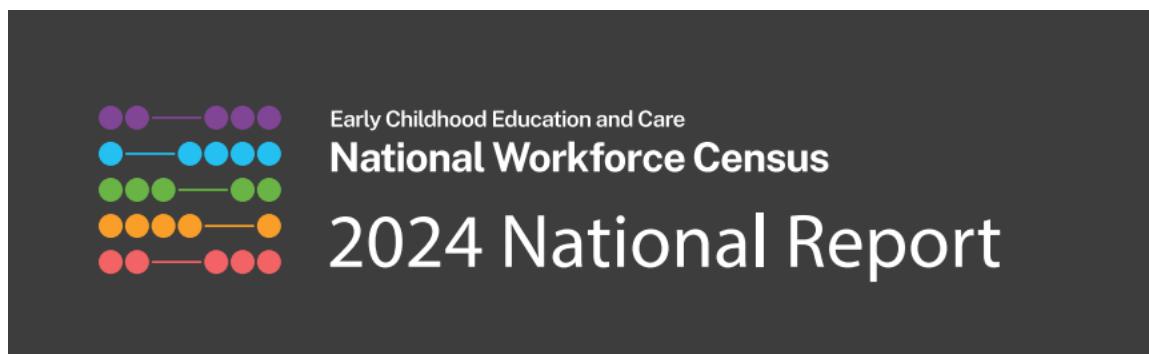
Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks. Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

National Workforce Census 2024 dashboard out now



The National Workforce Census 2024 interactive dashboard is now available.

The National Workforce Census (NWC) is the only national census of its type in Australia. The NWC aims to better understand the ECEC workforce and inform government policies and programs related to ECEC.

You can now explore this data in an [interactive dashboard](#), including:

- workforce demographics
- employment arrangements
- work experience
- relevant qualifications
- enrolled study.

The NWC 2024 dashboard comes with a [user guide](#) to help you navigate through the information.

[Explore the results and find out more](#) on our website.



Sector Spotlight

Delivering early childhood education and care in Napranum

A community-run ECEC service in Napranum, Queensland has opened its newly integrated service, funded through the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF).

The Napranum Early Childhood Centre opened on 23 June 2025 following more than 2 years of dedicated work led by the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council. The community-run service brings together the former daycare and kindergarten services into one place, giving local families more flexibility and access to high-quality ECEC.

The service was funded in 2021 as part of an almost \$30 million expansion of the CCCF restricted grant. This grant funds mostly new First Nations-led ECEC services and is part of a broader commitment to Closing the Gap.

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the community partner for services set up under the grant, supporting the establishment and implementation of community-led and culturally safe ECEC.

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

Preschool Outcomes Measure national trial underway

A national trial of the Preschool Outcomes Measure is now underway.

The Preschool Outcomes Measure is a new national assessment tool to help teachers and educators support children's learning and development in the year before full-time school.

A national trial will take place between July and September 2025. It will see teachers and educators:

- trial a more developed, integrated version of the national tool for the first time
- provide feedback on the functionality, user experience and appropriateness of the Preschool Outcomes Measure in practice.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is leading the development and trial of the Preschool Outcomes Measure, in partnership with:

- Ninti One
- Goodstart Early Learning.

Read more about the [Preschool Outcomes Measure](#) on our website. To find out more about how the Preschool Outcomes Measure is being trialled in your region, contact your local education department.

Are you details up to date on Starting Blocks?

[StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) is the one place where families can find and compare all ECEC services.

We publish your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Please report your **detailed** fees and vacancies, and keep information up to date. This includes:

- reporting your detailed fees instead of a link to your website
- reporting your vacancies by type, age group and session.



This is the best way to ensure families can find out about your services.

Check and update your details via the [\(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Facts from FAL

2024-25 session reports close on Sunday 3 August

Please submit all session reports for the 2024–25 financial year by 11.59 pm AEST on 3 August 2025.

You must submit session reports in the CCSS. Access the CCSS via the [\(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

The CCSS will close for the 2024–25 financial year from 3 August 2025. After this date, you will not be able to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any sessions of care between 8 July 2024 and 6 July 2025.

Submitting your session reports by this deadline is essential so Services Australia can balance family payments.

Find guidance on [submitting session reports](#) on our website.

Learn about Reporting sessions of care in our [Geccko course](#).

Enrolments

You must [enrol](#) children correctly so families can get CCS. You must submit enrolment notices on time.

Advertising your service

You can only offer certain types of [inducements](#) to secure a child's enrolment.

Workforce support

National workforce strategy update

We have published 2 reports developed under action Focus Area 2-1 of the National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy.

The 10-year strategy aims to foster a sustainable and high-quality ECEC workforce. The reports explore targeted programs to support studies and placements for specified groups of potential educators and teachers.

The [regional and remote potential educators and teachers report](#) explores how to better support people in regional and remote areas to enrol in and complete ECEC qualifications. Scyne Advisory prepared the report in consultation with ECEC stakeholders.

The [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander potential educators and teachers report](#) examines how tailored, place-based programs and support from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations can help strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC workforce. SNAICC – National Voice for our Children prepared the report in consultation with ECEC stakeholders.

Learn more about the [National Workforce Strategy](#).



Professional development subsidies: eligibility explained

Not sure if your staff qualify for our professional development subsidies? Here's a quick breakdown.

For **both subsidies**, staff must:

- be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or hold a valid work visa
- work at a CCS-approved service
- be part of the [educator-to-child ratio](#)
- have worked more than 40 hours overall in the last 3 months.

The **professional development subsidy** covers training for:

- early childhood teachers
- early childhood educators
- centre managers/directors.

These staff must not have received funding in the 2024–25 financial year.

The **paid practicum subsidy** provides paid leave for staff to undertake a practicum as part of a:

- diploma-level ECEC qualification
- degree-level ECEC qualification
- post-graduate early childhood teaching qualification.

Only CCS approved providers can apply for the subsidies on behalf of staff. Applications are open now.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Apply for the practicum exchange living allowance

Would your educators benefit from a living and travel allowance to complete their practicum?

Educators who use the [practicum exchange network](#) to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area can get a living and travel allowance.

The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. We pay the allowance to providers who pass it on to educators in full.

Applications close 19 September 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).



From the department

Worker retention payment update

Reminder: fee growth cap changes 8 August

A reminder that from 8 August 2025, fee growth will be capped at 4.2%. This is a change from the current fee growth cap of 4.4%.

Providers who get the worker retention payment – or want to be eligible for it in the future – must limit fee growth by a set percentage. This is known as the **fee growth cap**.

The fee growth cap is an important condition of the worker retention payment. It:

- supports affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- ensures the cost of a wage increase is not passed on to families.

The 4.2% fee growth cap will remain in place until 7 August 2026. It applies to all services receiving the worker retention payment and those that want to be eligible for it in the future, unless we approve an alternative cap.

The provisional decision of the [gender-based undervaluation – priority awards review](#) is not grounds to increase fees above the fee growth cap.

Learn more about the [worker retention payment](#).

Get help

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks. Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

Facts from FAL

Identify PMCs at your organisation

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

PMCs take part in the decision-making or management of the provider, and:

- are a member of the group that makes executive or legal decisions on behalf of the provider
- have authority, responsibility, or significant influence over planning, directing or controlling the provider
- are in charge of the day-to-day operations of the provider
- are in charge of the day-to-day operations of a service.



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

Provider approvals

You must be [approved to operate an ECEC service](#) and administer Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Overpayments and debt

Sometimes, you may receive more CCS than you're entitled to. This is known as an [overpayment](#). If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payment to pay back the difference.

Workforce support

Practicum exchange living allowance now open

Applications for the practicum exchange living and travel allowance are now open.

Providers can apply for an allowance for educators who use the [practicum exchange network](#) to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area.

The allowance provides \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

In 2025–26, we will support up to 100 educators with a living and travel allowance.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible educators. We pay the allowance to providers who must pass it on to educators in full.

Applications close 19 September 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

Applications now open for professional development subsidies

Applications for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies are now open.

Providers can now apply for:

- a professional development subsidy to cover one day of training for eligible staff
- a paid practicum subsidy to give staff paid leave while they undertake a practicum.

We pay the subsidies to providers.

The subsidies aim to build capacity and skills in the early childhood workforce.

We encourage all eligible providers to apply. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from a subsidy, please talk to your provider.

Applications will close on 19 September 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).



Observing to provide early support for children's wellbeing

Join Be You for a webinar on observing to provide early support for children's wellbeing.

This Be You Fundamentals event will discuss early support and its importance for children's wellbeing and development.

The session will take place online at 3:30 pm AEST on 21 July 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)

News for families

Confirm your income now if your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) has stopped

If you got CCS in the 2023-24 financial year, you need to confirm your family income so we can keep paying you.

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



Webinar on reporting third-party payments and prescribed provider discounts

From 7 July, you must report prescribed third-party payments and prescribed provider discounts in session reports.

We're hosting a webinar on 15 July 2025 at 1 pm AEST to provide general information about the changes.

The webinar will discuss:

- what kinds of payments you need to report
- how different state and territory payments can be estimated for reporting purposes.

The webinar will be recorded and published on our website, along with a transcript, for those who can't attend.

[Register for the webinar.](#)

What are prescribed discounts?

Prescribed discounts allow third parties or providers to contribute to the gap fee without reducing the family's CCS entitlement. This can reduce or remove the gap fee. These discounts provide extra support for families.

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances
- provider discount for a child of an educator or a cook that is employed by the provider
- provider discount for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.

What are the changes?

You will need to include the type and an estimate of the discount when submitting and updating session reports.

You must maintain records of all discounts. Your records must show how the discount was applied to a family's account.

If a prescribed discount has been applied for the session, the family's statement of entitlement must include:

- the type of discount
- the amount of the discount.

Find more information and examples of how to [report prescribed discounts in session reports](#) on our website.



From the department

We acknowledge the challenging times facing the early childhood education and care sector

We know that the vast majority of providers and educators are dedicated professionals who care deeply about the safety and quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC).

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening safety in ECEC because every child deserves to be safe in early learning and every parent deserves to know their own children are safe.

From 1 September 2025, new regulatory changes will be implemented, including:

- mandatory 24-hour reporting of any allegations, complaints or incidents of abuse, and
- strict controls on digital devices, consistent with the *National Model Code and Guidelines*
- a ban on vaping.

The government will also strengthen Commonwealth regulatory and enforcement powers to deal with providers that put profit over quality and child safety at risk by introducing legislation to:

- prevent providers who persistently fail to meet minimum standards and repetitively breach the National Law from opening new Child Care Subsidy approved services
- take compliance action against existing providers with significant and continued breaches, including the option to cut off access to Child Care Subsidy funding where appropriate
- strengthen powers to deal with providers that pose an integrity risk
- introduce new powers of entry - allowing authorised Commonwealth officers under the Family Assistance Law to conduct spot checks and unannounced visits at Child Care Subsidy approved services.

The work you do is incredibly important, and we thank you for your support, your hard work and your dedication to Australia's children.

Reporting prescribed discounts via session reports

From 7 July, you must report prescribed third-party payments and prescribed provider discounts in session reports.

Prescribed discounts allow third parties or providers to contribute to the gap fee without reducing the family's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlement. This can reduce or remove the gap fee. These discounts provide extra support for families.

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances
- provider discount for a child of an educator or a cook that is employed by the provider
- provider discount for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.



What you need to do

You will need to include the type and an estimate of the discount when submitting and updating session reports.

You must maintain records of all discounts. Your records must show how the discount was applied to a family's account.

If a prescribed discount has been applied for the session, the family's statement of entitlement must include:

- the type of discount
- the amount of the discount.

Read more details about the changes in [our announcement](#).

Webinar

We're hosting a webinar on 15 July 2025 at 1 pm AEST to provide general information about the third-party payment changes. The webinar will discuss:

- what kinds of payments you need to report
- how different state and territory payments can be calculated for reporting purposes.

The webinar will be recorded and published on our website, along with a transcript, for those who can't attend.

[Register for the webinar](#).

Early Education Service Delivery Prices project

We have engaged Deloitte Access Economics to help us understand the costs for delivering quality early childhood education and care (ECEC).

We are working towards building a universal, affordable ECEC system. To get there, we need a better understanding of what it costs providers to deliver quality ECEC.

This will help the government to:

- gain a data-driven understanding of the reasonable costs of delivering quality ECEC
- make further decisions about the pathway toward universal ECEC.

We have engaged Deloitte Access Economics to deliver the Service Delivery Prices project including consulting with:

- providers
- sector peaks
- all levels of government.

Deloitte Access Economics will:

- look at key areas required to deliver quality ECEC, such as fair wages, property costs and utilities
- review and calculate the reasonable cost of providing high-quality ECEC service delivery
- work out additional costs of service delivery for higher needs cohorts
- set a service baseline to ensure providers can meet all their obligations under the National Quality Framework and Family Assistance Law (FAL)
- contact providers asking for cost data and cost drivers.

The data will reflect how pricing varies across:



- geographical locations
- care types
- higher needs cohorts (e.g. children aged 0-2 years old and remote locations)
- identified underserved and possibly unserved markets
- business types.

Consultation will begin later this year. To get involved, you should:

- ensure your details are correct and up to date in the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP)
- [subscribe](#) to this weekly newsletter
- join our [Facebook group](#).

Find out more about the [Early Education Service Delivery Prices project](#) on our website.

Worker retention payment update

Payment schedule now available

We've published a payment schedule to help you understand your worker retention payments.

We process standard payments every 4 weeks in arrears. The schedule identifies payments made to date and the periods they relate to.

View the [payment schedule](#) under **when we make payments** on our website. We'll continue to update the schedule to keep you informed.

We appreciate your patience as we process applications. If approved, your first payment will include backpay from the start of your grant agreement. You can apply for backdated payments until 30 September 2025.

Facts from FAL

Reminder that fee reporting is due 14 July

Changes made in September 2024 mean that you must notify us of fees at least twice a year to ensure they are correctly updated or remain accurate.

You need to notify us of your fees 14 days after the end of the:

- financial year – due 14 July
- calendar year – due 14 January.

This also includes reporting no change to fees.

To report no change, update the date of event on the fees and inclusions screen via the PEP or your third-party software.

This reporting obligation is in addition to the current notification requirements to report the fees within 14 days of:

- receiving CCS approval
- starting the CCS-approved_service
- changing your fees.

This change was part of the government's commitment to improving the transparency of child care fees. It will help families make informed financial decisions about ECEC.



Read more about [notifications and reporting](#) on our website.

Overseas travel and allowable absences

Families can get CCS when their child is unable to attend child care up to 42 days a year.

Families can use their 42 allowable absences for short-term travel overseas. However, families will stop being entitled for CCS after 6 weeks overseas until they return to Australia.

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

Child Care Subsidy approval can be cancelled

A provider or service approval may be cancelled if you fail to comply with your obligations.

We've recently published new information about cancellation of approval. Did you know we can cancel your CCS approval for not complying with the conditions of continued approval under (FAL)?

This includes where:

- you fail to provide care for 3 continuous months
- you cease to operate all the approved services for which you are approved as a provider
- you no longer have any services for which you are approved as a provider
- there are serious risks to CCS payments and/or child safety and wellbeing.

We can also cancel your CCS approval if your National Law provider or service approval is cancelled.

Find out more about [cancellation of approval](#) on our website.

2024-25 session reports close soon

You must submit all session reports for the 2024–25 financial year by 11.59 pm AEST on 3 August 2025.

The Child Care Subsidy System will close for the 2024–25 financial year from Sunday 3 August 2025. After this date you will not be able to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any sessions of care between 8 July 2024 and 6 July 2025.

Submitting your session reports by this deadline is essential so Services Australia can balance family payments.

Submitting accurate session reports on time is required under Family Assistance Law. Failure to comply with your obligations may result in compliance action.

Find guidance on [submitting session reports](#) on our website.

Working with children check

A [working with children check](#) is a safeguard to protect the health and safety of children. Under FAL, ECEC providers have specific obligations regarding working with children checks.

Infringements

We can issue [infringement notices](#), or fines, to providers that don't follow the rules under FAL.



Workforce support

Professional development subsidies opening soon

Applications for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies open next week.

From 14 July 2025, providers will be able to apply for subsidies to:

- help staff undertake highly recommended or mandatory training
- give staff paid leave while they complete a practicum.

The subsidies can help you:

- strengthen your team's skills and professional experience
- maintain ratios while staff develop their skills.

Mark your calendars and start planning which staff members could benefit from these opportunities.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#) and see if your staff qualify.

Get ready for the practicum exchange living allowance

Applications for the practicum exchange living and travel allowance open next week.

From 14 July 2025, providers can apply for an allowance for educators who use the [practicum exchange network](#) to complete a practicum in a regional or remote area.

The allowance will provide \$1,552.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks, for living and travel costs associated with completing a practicum away from home.

In 2025–26, we will support up to 100 educators with a living and travel allowance.

Here's how you can prepare:

- visit our website to [learn more about the allowance](#)
- speak to your educators who need to complete a practicum to find out if they'd benefit
- encourage them to join the [practicum exchange network](#) to arrange their practicum.

Be You In Practice event

Join Be You for a webinar on leadership strategies to support educator wellbeing.

This event will explore:

- how leaders can build mentally healthy workplaces
- an example of an early learning service's action plan to respond to educator workplace stressors.

The session will take place online at 4:30 pm AEST on 16 July 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)



From the department

New Child Care Subsidy data: March quarter 2025

We've published the latest quarterly data about the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

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

Key findings from the March quarter 2025 include:

- 1,444,410 children from 1,015,790 families used CCS-approved care
- 15,158 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 27.9 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$13.20
- the Australian Government paid \$3.59 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [March quarter 2025](#) report.

Changes to In Home Care from 1 July

From 1 July, there are new In Home Care (IHC) National Guidelines and new arrangements for IHC Support Agencies.

The new [IHC National Guidelines](#) will replace the existing IHC guidelines and handbook. This will help streamline the processes, improving clarity for IHC providers.

The new guidelines include:

- detailed guidance on how the program operates
- legislative and policy framework.

IHC Support Agencies oversee the delivery of IHC in each state and territory. We have finalised new contracts with 3 [IHC Support Agencies](#) following a limited tender.

IHC Support Agencies will work with families and providers to:

- assess family eligibility
- connect families with approved IHC services
- establish a community of practice among providers
- support a high quality and nationally consistent approach to IHC.

The following organisations have been contracted to deliver IHC Support Agency services from 1 July 2025:

- New South Wales Family Day Care Association
- Family Day Care Association Queensland
- Wanslea Family Services.

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



Reporting prescribed discounts via session reports

From 7 July, you must include information on prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports. The reporting of non-prescribed discounts will be voluntary.

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances
- provider discounts for a child of an educator or a cook that is employed by the provider
- provider discounts for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.

You will need to include the type and estimated amount of the prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports.

These changes:

- help us to better understand out-of-pocket costs experienced by families
- ensure that all prescribed discounts are reported within session reports to support compliance.

We will host a webinar on these changes in coming weeks. We will provide further details on the webinar in future newsletters.

For more details on [prescribed third-party payments](#) and to read examples, visit our website.

Worker retention payment update

Historical leave liability payment

Applications for the one-off payment for **accrued historical leave liabilities** are now closed.

Providers can continue to:

- apply for the worker retention payment by 30 September 2025 to be eligible for backdated funding
- request a funding review with backdated payments by 31 October 2025.

Minimum payment rates

We have updated the [minimum payment rates](#) on our website to show the worker retention payment rates payable from this month.

Get help with worker retention payment

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks. Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).



Sector spotlight

New guidance for early childhood education and care student assessments

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has developed new guidance for registered training organisations. Training providers can use this guidance when assessing early childhood education and care (ECEC) students in the workplace.

The guidance also helps students understand their obligations during assessments at an ECEC service.

Training providers must follow child safe practices during student assessment in ECEC workplaces.

Direct observation is the preferred assessment method. Training providers may use live streaming where direct observation is not possible. For example, if the ECEC service is in a rural or remote setting. The training provider and ECEC service must mutually agree on this.

Training providers must be aware of child safety requirements and best practice recommendations. This includes the [National Model Code for Taking Images and Videos](#).

Read more about the [new guidance on ECEC student assessments](#).

Facts from FAL

Gap fee audits

We conduct regular audits to check providers are taking all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically.

We conduct audits by either:

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

If we contact you about an audit, you must respond promptly. We may request additional documents and statements regarding the collection of gap fees during an audit.

Collecting gap fees from families using electronic funds transfer is a requirement under Family Assistance Law (FAL).

Read more about:

- [what to do if you get a section 158 notice](#)
- [guidance on collecting gap fees](#).

New Geccko course: record keeping

Our new short course on record keeping will help you comply with your requirements under FAL.

Register for this course on Geccko, our online learning platform for the ECEC sector.

The course will help you:

- define record keeping



- understand the record keeping requirements under FAL
- identify the records providers must make and keep
- explain the potential consequences of failing to make and keep records
- explain why you need to keep records safe and secure.

The course should take 20 minutes to complete and you can:

- login using your tablet, laptop, or mobile phone
- download course certificates upon completion
- access other resources such as videos and tip sheets.

Find out more and register for [Geccko](#) to access the course.

Enrolments

You must [enrol](#) children correctly so families can get CCS. You must submit enrolment notices on time.

Submit a tip-off

If you have information related to people or child care services or providers who are not following the rules, you can report it to us anonymously. Our [CCS fraud tip-off form](#) only takes a few minutes to complete.



From the department

2025-26 hourly rate caps

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) hourly rate caps and family income thresholds will go up from 7 July.

The hourly rate caps and income thresholds are adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

See the [2025–26 hourly rate caps and new income thresholds](#) on our website.

Worker retention payment update

Backdating deadline extended

We have extended the worker retention payment backdating deadline.

Providers can:

- apply by 30 September 2025 to be eligible for backdated funding
- request a funding review with backdated payments by 31 October 2025.

Minimum payment rates

We have updated the [minimum payment rates](#) on our website to show the worker retention payment rates payable from 1 July 2025.

Check out our application guide

Our application guide can help you apply for the worker retention payment. You can:

- [read the guide on our website](#)
- [download a print-ready version of the guide](#)
- [access the guide in Geccko.](#)

Facts from FAL

Changing session reports from previous financial years

After a financial year ends, the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) closes for that year.

In limited circumstances, you may need to:

- submit a late session report
- vary or withdraw session reports.

If you need to submit, update or withdraw a session report from a previous financial year, you must apply to the CCS Provider Helpdesk.

You need to provide a separate application per family.



If you are applying to amend session reports for multiple children or weeks, you must provide the information in a spreadsheet. We cannot accept your application until you provide all information required.

Find more information about [changing session reports from previous financial years](#) on our website.

Absences

You must report when a child was absent and the family was charged. You must report [absences](#) in session reports.

Payments and Fees

You must pass on CCS to families as a fee reduction. You must report [fee information](#).

Workforce Support

Have you acquitted your professional development subsidies?

Providers must acquit professional development and paid practicum subsidies by 31 July 2025.

Providers who have **not yet acquitted their funding** must:

- follow the instructions we have sent you, if you got a subsidy in the 2023-24 financial year
- acquit funding through the [grants portal](#), if you got a subsidy in the 2024–25 financial year.

Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

News for families

Get ready for Child Care Subsidy balancing this tax time.

If you get Child Care Subsidy (CCS), there may be things you need to do before we can balance your payments.

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

Report CCS fraud anonymously online

[Report now](#)



From the department

Read the results of the 2024 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

The AEDC is a national measure of early childhood development. It's conducted every 3 years to examine how children have developed by the time they start school.

Data was collected on over 288,000 children in their first year of full-time school, from 7,323 schools. This represents over 94% of eligible children nationally.

The findings are publicly available. Data can be used to help people and organisations with their work and contribute to early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems.

Visit the new-look AEDC website for data and resources to support education, health and community policy and planning.

For more information, visit [Australian Early Development Census](#) on our website.

Worker retention payment backdating deadline extended

We have extended the worker retention payment backdating deadline to 30 September 2025.

We will backdate payments if you:

- submit an application by 30 September 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

We will backdate payments to:

- 2 December 2024, for workplace instruments that cover the full grant period even if adopted later
- the date your workplace instrument starts, if this is after 2 December 2024.

The deadline for requesting a funding review with backdated funding has also been extended to 31 October 2025.

Before you apply:

- read the [grant guidelines](#)
- check out our [application guide](#)
- [search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs
- see the [minimum rates you must pass on to eligible workers](#) from 1 July.

Sector Spotlight

National Child Safety Review – new sector guidance

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has released 2 new National Quality Framework (NQF) Child Safety Guides.

The guides will help providers and services prepare for changes to the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The changes will take effect on 1 September 2025.



- The [NQF Child Safe Culture Guide](#) helps embed child-safe cultures.
- The [NQF Online Safety Guide](#) provides support to keep children safe when using online and digital technologies.

A range of support tools are available within the NQF Child Safety Guides.

Changes to the National Regulations include:

- new requirements for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments
- 24-hour notification for abuse incidents and allegations (down from 7 days)
- prohibiting the use of vaping substances and devices in services.

Refinements to the National Quality Standard to strengthen the focus on child safety will start on 1 January 2026.

For more information, refer to the [Information Sheet](#).

The new regulations form part of the response to the 16 recommendations of last year's [child safety review](#).

Access the guides and further information on [ACECQA's website](#).

Play Based Learning with intentionality

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) has published a new discussion paper, *Play-based learning with intentionality*.

The paper looks at:

- how 'intentional teaching' maximises children's learning in early childhood education, and
- how improvements in ECEC quality can reduce the likelihood of developmental vulnerability at school entry.

The new paper builds on recent AERO research. The research showed there is a strong connection between children's learning and development and the educational program and practices used at ECEC services.

Read the paper on [AERO's website](#).

Inclusive Capability Framework

All ECEC services must be inclusive. To support inclusion in ECEC, we have engaged ACECQA to develop an Inclusive Practice Framework.

The Inclusive Practice Framework is a professional development resource that will:

- strengthen the capability of services to embed inclusive practices
- better support children and families experiencing barriers to access and participation.

The framework will do this by:

- helping services reflect on current inclusive practices and plan for ongoing improvement
- supporting the identification of emerging areas of inclusive practice
- complementing state and territory initiatives and other high-quality resources.

Over the next 12 months, ACECQA will develop and trial the framework. ACECQA will collaborate with:

- ECEC educators
- ECEC providers and services



- national peak associations
- sector organisations
- expert practitioners.

A consortium between Griffith University, Macquarie University and Queensland University of Technology will support ACECQA to develop the framework.

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

Let's Count

Are you looking to strengthen numeracy at your service? Let's Count is an Australian Government funded early mathematics program for children aged 3 to 5.

Let's Count has been developed by the Smith Family in partnership with early childhood experts.

The program helps ECEC educators develop the maths skills of children in their care by noticing, exploring, and talking about mathematics using everyday activities.

Let's Count:

- aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework V 2.0
- is free for all ECEC professionals.

The program is a practical professional development opportunity for early childhood educators and includes:

- 3 self-paced modules
- a 4- to 6-week practical application of the program content
- a 2-hour facilitated online forum.

Find out more in our [Newsroom article](#).

Help families find your service

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

Make sure you report your current detailed fee and vacancy information so families can find you in the new financial year. This includes:

- reporting your detailed fees instead of a link to your website
- reporting your vacancies by type, age group and session.

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

Facts from FAL

Notify us about changes

You must [notify us](#) about fees, vacancies, closures and changes to information.



Statement of tax record

New early childhood education and care providers must provide a [statement of tax record](#) as part of their Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approval.

Share with families

Have you received an invitation to have your say on child care?

We're inviting randomly selected parents and carers to have a say on child care in a national survey.

Invited participants can access the online survey from the QR code in their letter or link via SMS and/or email. You can choose to enter a draw to win one of 30 \$200 gift vouchers.

Complete the survey before it closes at **10 am AEST Monday 30 June 2025**. It should take around 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

The survey will help us to evaluate child care policies and how they impact child care quality, availability and affordability.

[Find out more about the survey on Orima's website.](#)

News for families

You have until 30 June 2025 to confirm your family income for Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

You need to confirm your family income if you got CCS in the 2023-24 financial year.

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



From the department

Help improve our website

We're looking for volunteers from the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector to take part in a short online user testing activity. This will help us make sure our website is simple to use.

Testing will only take about 15 minutes. It can be done on your computer or phone. No special skills are needed – just your honest feedback.

If you're keen to help, [complete the survey now](#).

Child Care Subsidy hourly rate caps are changing soon

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) hourly rate caps and family income thresholds will go up from 7 July 2025.

The hourly rate caps and income thresholds are adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The maximum hourly rate we subsidise is based on the type of care you provide. The 2025–26 hourly rate caps for each care type are outlined below.

Care type	Hourly rate cap for children below school age	Hourly rate cap for school-age children
Centre Based Day Care	\$14.63	\$12.81
Outside School Hours Care	\$14.63	\$12.81
Family Day Care	\$13.56	\$13.56
In Home Care (per family)	\$39.80	\$39.80

Learn more about hourly rate caps and see the rates for second and younger children [on our website](#).

The family income thresholds have also changed according to CPI, as outlined below.

Family income	Subsidy rate
Up to \$85,279	90%
More than \$85,279 to below \$535,279	Between 90% and 0%



The percentage decreases by 1% for every \$5,000 of income a family earns

\$535,279 or more	0%
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A family's CCS subsidy rate is the percentage of the hourly rate the government will subsidise.

Read more about [how much CCS a family can get](#) on our website.

Reporting prescribed discounts via session reports

From 7 July, you must include information on prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports. The reporting of non-prescribed discounts will be voluntary.

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances
- provider discounts for a child of an educator or a cook that is employed by the provider
- provider discounts for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.

You will need to include the type and amount of the prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports.

These changes:

- help us to better understand out of pocket costs experienced by families
- ensure that all prescribed discounts are reported within session reports to support compliance.

For more details on [prescribed third-party payments](#), visit our website.

Worker retention payment update

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates or grant assistance sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks. Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).



Facts from FAL

Persons with management or control (PMCs) of the provider have obligations and tasks they must perform.

Each PMC must:

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

We have a [comprehensive list of PMS obligations, tasks and frameworks](#) on our website.

The enrolment process in 4 steps

Enrolling children correctly means families can get CCS payments.

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

Follow these steps.

Step 1

Families lodge a CCS claim with Services Australia. They should do this before their child starts at your service.

Step 2

You and the family agree on care arrangements for the child. Families must agree to the care arrangements in writing.

Step 3

Submit an enrolment notice in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) for the care arrangement.

Step 4

The family will be prompted to confirm the enrolment via their Centrelink online account. CCS payments will not start until the enrolment is confirmed.

Read more details about the [enrolment process](#) on our website.

Absences at the start or end of an enrolment

Sometimes, families can get CCS paid for absences at the start and end of an enrolment.



This happens only in certain circumstances:

- the child care service changes owner during the child's extended period
- the child's usual service is closed and the child attends a different service, requiring a new enrolment under the same provider
- a family tragedy has occurred within the 28 days before the absence in the child's extended period
- the enrolment was ceased incorrectly
- any of the additional [reasons](#).

The extended period begins:

- 6 days before the child's first physical attendance and ends on the first attendance day, or
- the day of the child's last physical attendance and ends 6 days after the last attendance day.

To reduce the risk of a CCS debt, you should update a family's enrolment when their circumstances change. This includes:

- foreseen absences of more than 14 weeks
- unforeseen absence, during which you become reasonably sure that the child is not returning to care before their enrolment will end, or within 14 weeks.

Read more about [absences at the start and end of an enrolment](#) on our website.

Workforce support

Be You events for early learning in June

Join Be You for upcoming events to make positive changes in your learning community.

17 June 11:00 am AEST: Empowerment – listening to children's voices for their wellbeing.

19 June 2:00 pm AEST: Making change with impact. Turning ideas into action

27 June 2:00 pm AEST: Applying a wellbeing lens to your Quality Improvement Plan

Find out more and register for [Be You early learning events](#).

Be You is the national mental health and wellbeing initiative for ECEC services and schools



Unplanned outage with the Child Care Subsidy System

An unplanned outage with the Child Care Subsidy System affected some session report submissions over the weekend.

If you could not submit session reports via your third party software after 11.59 pm Friday 6 June:

- submit before 9 pm 9 June to get your Child Care Subsidy payment on Wednesday 11 June
- submit before 9 pm 10 June to get your Child Care Subsidy payment on Thursday 12 June.

Session reports submitted via the Provider Entry Point (PEP), or before 11.59 pm Friday, are not affected.

There is no need to contact the CCS Helpdesk.



From the department

Help improve our website

We're looking for volunteers from the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector to take part in a short online user testing activity. This will help us make sure our website is simple to use.

Testing will only take about 15 minutes. It can be done on your computer or phone. No special skills are needed – just your honest feedback.

If you're keen to help, [complete the survey now](#).

Understanding your privacy obligations

You must tell families if you collect their personal information. You must take reasonable steps to ensure families are aware.

You collect personal information from families when you enrol children. You then share this information with us so they can get Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

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

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

So that families can get CCS, we need to:

- collect their personal information
- share this information with other government departments, like Services Australia.

Make sure that families understand that we cannot provide CCS without their permission for you to share information with us.

You must also take reasonable steps to protect the personal information that you hold about families. This includes keeping families' information safe from loss, unauthorised access, use, modification, disclosure or misuse.

Read more about:

- your [privacy obligations](#)
- how we handle personal information in our [privacy policy](#).

Read more about the [Australian Privacy Principles](#).

CCS Provider Helpdesk closed Monday

The CCS Provider Helpdesk will be closed because of the public holiday in most states and territories on Monday 9 June.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEST on Tuesday 10 June 2025.



You can contact the helpdesk anytime CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Worker retention payment update

Minimum wage rates increase from 1 July 2025

The modern award minimum wage rates will increase from 1 July 2025 following the Fair Work Commission's 2025 [Annual Wage Review](#) decision.

The [minimum payment rates](#) on our website have been updated to show the worker retention payment rates payable from 1 July 2025.

Check out our application guide.

Our application guide can help you apply for the worker retention payment. You can:

- [read the guide on our website](#)
- [download a print-ready version of the guide](#)
- [access the guide in Geccko.](#)

Access free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

Support includes:

- help to understand, develop and implement a workplace instrument
- help to submit your application
- help to request an alternative fee growth cap or funding review
- administration, record-keeping and payroll support
- workplace relations or legal advice
- online information sessions
- helplines, and more.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates or grant assistance sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

We've updated our provider tool kit

The provider tool kit is a one-stop-shop for all ECEC providers and services.

It contains links to forms, guidebooks, task cards and other resources that are accessed the most by providers and services.

The provider tool kit includes:

- a new resources section, to make it easy to find what you are looking for
- new communication tool kits, to help you communicate about key topics
- a link to our YouTube playlist, where you can find all our ECEC videos.



Make sure that you visit the page and add it to your favourites.

You can find the [provider tool kit](#) on our website.

Sector spotlight

National Child Safety Review – feedback closing soon

Have your say on the possible changes to make education and care services even safer for children.

You can provide feedback on proposed policy options under the National Quality Framework. We want to hear from:

- approved providers and services
- educators
- staff
- volunteers
- families.

[Surveys and submissions](#) close on 11 June 2025.

Help us spread the word! Please share this important consultation opportunity with your networks to encourage others to get involved.

For more information, visit [Child Safety Review](#).

Facts from FAL

Inducements and advertising

ECEC providers may not offer certain types of inducements. An inducement is an incentive offered by a provider to secure a child's enrolment.

Inducements that are financial or not aligned with the quality or delivery of education or care services are not allowed.

Some examples of inducements that you cannot offer include:

- cash, vouchers, gift cards
- iPads, tablets or other devices
- other gifts.

Find out more about [Inducement and advertising at your service](#) on our website.

Refresh your knowledge of Family Assistance Law

Keep up to date with your Family Assistance Law (FAL) obligations by completing one of our top courses on Geccko.

You can get a refresher on:



- Family Assistance Law notification requirements
- electronic payment of gap fees
- persons with management or control.

Geccko offers free courses, videos and tip sheets that you can access on any device. You can also download course certificates upon completion.

Find these courses and more on [Geccko](#).

Workforce support

Supporting the next generation of educators

Do you employ educators who are working towards their qualification? If so, they may need to complete a practicum at a service other than your own.

Generally, practicums:

- are mandatory to become a qualified ECEC educator
- must be partly completed outside of an educator's primary ECEC service.

Practicum exchanges can foster:

- diverse experience and knowledge
- networking and support opportunities
- skill and knowledge transfer.

This is where the [practicum exchange network](#) comes in handy. Educators can join the network to connect with services and arrange practicums.

Share this information with educators in training at your service.



NSW Floods: CCS period of emergency extended to 2 June 2025

We've extended the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 19 May 2025 to 2 June 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Walcha Council
- Armidale Regional Council
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Cessnock City Council
- Clarence Valley Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Kempsey Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- City of Newcastle
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Maitland City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:



- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your contact details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).



From the department

Parents can win \$200 for having their say on child care

We're inviting parents and carers to have a say on child care in a national survey.

Parents and carers will be randomly selected to take part in the survey. They will receive a letter over the next week with a QR link to the online survey. They will also receive a link via SMS and/or email.

Participants can choose to enter a draw to win a \$200 gift voucher. We will draw 30 gift vouchers across Australia.

The online survey opens 2 June and closes at **10 am AEST Monday 30 June 2025**.

The survey should take around 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

Please encourage parents and carers at your service to complete the survey. The survey will help us to evaluate child care policies and how they impact child care quality, availability and affordability.

If you have any questions about this survey, email the department at sps@education.gov.au.

Parents can find out more about the survey on [Orima's website](#).

Help improve our website

Want to help improve our website? We need your input!

Over the coming weeks we're going to test our website, and we'd like to know what you think. Simply reply to this email to express your interest in taking part.

Get help with the worker retention payment

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks. Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

Reconciliation Day Helpdesk closed

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Provider Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday in the ACT on Monday 2 June.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEST on Tuesday 3 June 2025.



You can contact the helpdesk anytime at CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Sector Spotlight

It's National Reconciliation Week



National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements. It's a time to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

The NRW 2025 theme of *Bridging Now to Next* reflects the ongoing connection between past, present and future.

Read more about what you can do for NRW 2025 on the [National Reconciliation Week website](#).

Closing the Gap in early childhood

Closing the Gap targets 3 and 4 focus on the early years. They aim to ensure children:

- are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- thrive in their early years.

We're investing in measures to support these targets and improve the lives of First Nations children. These include:

- a formal partnership agreement with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children to support Closing the Gap priority reforms and shared decision-making
- the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership between governments and First Nations representatives to drive community-led outcomes
- the Connected Beginnings program helping First Nations children get the best start to life and support transition to school
- a Community Child Care Fund Restricted program funding new ECEC services in remote areas
- an intensive ECEC model trial at a dedicated First Nations site to help bridge the gap to school readiness
- changes to CCS from January 2026 to guarantee 100 hours of subsidised ECEC per fortnight for First Nations children.

Read more about how we're working to [Close the Gap in early childhood](#).

Facts from FAL

How make an anonymous tip-off

If you have information related to child care services or providers who are not following the rules, you can submit an anonymous tip-off.

We treat all tip-offs seriously. We ask that you try to provide us with as much detail as you can, so we are able to fully assess the information provided in the form.

The tip-off form is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to complete.

For more information about [reporting CCS fraud](#) or to access the tip-off form, visit our website.

Allowable absences will reset on 1 July

If you are noticing that absences are not paying when submitting session reports, check the family's absence count. Many families have used their 42 allowable absences by this time of year.

You can view the year-to-date absence count for a child via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or through your third-party software.

Families may be able to get additional absences once they have used their allowable absence days, in certain circumstances. Find out more about the circumstances for [allowable absences](#) on our website.

Families can find out more about absences on [Service's Australia website](#) and check their year-to-date absence count:

- in their Centrelink online account via myGov
- on the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

Submitting session reports

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

As a CCS-approved provider, you must:

- submit session reports within 14 days after the end of the week in which the session of care was provided
- submit a session report for each child at your service, for each week a session of care is provided
- include at least one session of care a week, recorded as either an attendance or absence
- only include sessions of care for which you charge a family a fee for providing care to their child.

Submit session reports through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

Learn how to submit [session reports](#) on time.



Workforce support

Offering discounted care to educators

Did you know you can offer discounted care to some staff without reducing their CCS?

The workforce discount is an optional incentive to help you attract and retain qualified staff.

You can offer the workforce discount to:

- early childhood teachers and educators
- centre directors and coordinators who hold an ECEC qualification
- cooks.

The employee must:

- work at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service
- have a child enrolled at a service where they work or that you own.

Unlike a standard discount, the workforce discount:

- is applied after CCS calculation
- allows you to report the full fee
- requires the employee to pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

You can:

- choose whether to offer the discount to employees
- determine the discount amount, provided employees pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

Learn more about [discounted care for the early childhood workforce](#).

News for families

It's time to estimate your 2025-6 family income

You need to estimate your family income so you can get the right amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

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



NSW Floods: CCS period of emergency expanded to Muswellbrook, Walcha and Armidale

We've added 3 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 19 May 2025 to 28 May 2025 in the following LGAs:

- **Muswellbrook Shire Council**
- **Walcha Council**
- **Armidale Regional Council**
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Cessnock City Council
- Clarence Valley Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Kempsey Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- City of Newcastle
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Maitland City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:



- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your contact details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).



NSW Floods: CCS period of emergency extended to 28 May 2025, new areas added

We've added 10 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 19 May 2025 to 28 May 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Bellingen Shire Council**
- **Cessnock City Council**
- **Clarence Valley Council**
- **City of Coffs Harbour**
- **Kempsey Shire Council**
- **Lake Macquarie City Council**
- **Nambucca Valley Council**
- **City of Newcastle**
- **Singleton Council**
- **Upper Hunter Shire Council**
- Maitland City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

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

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

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

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Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

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From the department

Want to help improve our website? We need your input!

Over the coming weeks we're going to test our website, and we'd like to know what you think. Simply reply to this email to express your interest in taking part.

Worker retention payment update

Check out our application guide

Our application guide can help you apply for the worker retention payment.

The guide outlines:

- what to do before you start your application
- the information you'll need to provide in the application
- what happens after you've applied.

You can:

- [read the guide on our website](#)
- [download a print-ready version of the guide](#)
- [access the guide in Geccko](#).

We recently streamlined the application to make it easier for you to apply.

CCS Period of emergency in NSW

A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place in NSW due to the impact of flooding.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Sector spotlight

Report detailed fees and vacancies

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

Report your **detailed** fees and vacancies to ensure your information displays correctly.



How to report fees

Report detailed fee information to ensure your fees display correctly. Fees will not be displayed if a URL is submitted.

To update fees in the Provider Entry Point (PEP):

1. Select **Fee and Inclusion Details**
2. Choose the **session type**
3. Select any relevant **inclusions** for each age group
4. Enter the **usual fee** for each age group
5. Submit

How to report vacancies

Reporting detailed vacancy information allows StartingBlocks.gov.au to display vacancies by type, age group, session, and include fee information. If you only submit a yes/no response, vacancies will be shown as general availability without specific details and families will be prompted to contact you for more information.

To update vacancies in the PEP, services need to enter vacancies by age group:

1. Select the **date** using the calendar icon
2. Indicate vacancy status by selecting **yes or no** for each day of the week
3. Click **Advanced** to provide detailed information by age group and session type
4. Submit

This information helps parents choose the best ECEC for their family.

Check and update these details on the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. If your third-party software doesn't allow for adding detailed fees or vacancies, they can be submitted through the PEP.

Services continue to meet the National Quality Standard

For the third quarter in a row, 91% of education and care services are rated Meeting NQS or above.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) Snapshot is a national report on children's education and care services operating under the NQF. It provides information on the sector and the quality ratings of services against the NQS.

As of 1 April 2025, 18,013 NQF-approved children's education and care services were operating across Australia.

Since the first quarter of 2024:

- the number of approved services increased by 2%
- the proportion of services rated Meeting NQS or above increased by 1%.

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



Facts from FAL

How are you notified about CCS payments?

Once a payment has been processed, you'll receive a payment advice in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). You can access the payment advice via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

The payment advice outlines:

- how much CCS was paid
- how much CCS was withheld
- if any amount was taken as payment towards a debt owed
- the total amount paid to the provider.

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

Becoming an approved provider



Providers must be approved to operate a child care service and administer CCS in Australia. You must be approved by the Australian Government and your state or territory government.

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

- the two types of approval required
- eligibility rules
- evidence required
- how to submit your application
- what happens after you apply
- how to add, remove or relocate a service
- why we suspend approvals.

Applicants must read this information carefully before applying and ensure they submit a complete application. If your application is incomplete, we'll ask for more information before we begin our assessment.

You'll also need to provide a [statement of tax record](#) as part of the fit and proper person requirements.

If you don't provide this information your application will be rejected and you'll need to reapply.

Learn more about [becoming an approved provider](#) on our website.

Avoiding an infringement notice

Law (FAL). Providers must make sure that they, their employees and educators follow the rules.

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

An infringement notice is a fine and can be expensive. For example, the fine for not updating the status of a current working with children check can be up to \$16,500.

Infringement notices 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.

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

Workforce support

Creating standout practicum opportunities

Want to attract quality student educators at your service? See our tips for getting the most out of the practicum exchange network.

Services with detailed, welcoming profiles typically receive more enquiries.

We recommend you:

- be specific about location, dates, hours and age groups
- highlight unique aspects about your service
- mention learning opportunities on offer
- be clear about your expectations and support offered
- respond promptly to any enquiries.

Create your profile on the [practicum exchange network](#) today.

Be You events for early learning

Join Be You for two online events to make positive changes in your learning community.

23 May 3.30 pm AEST: How acts of reconciliation contribute to community mental health and wellbeing.

28 May 2025 10 am AEST: Demystifying mental health strategies in education, presented by Dr. Robyn Mildon, CEO of the Centre for Evidence and Implementation.

Find out more and register for [Be You early learning events](#).

Be You is the national mental health and wellbeing initiative for ECEC services and schools.



Acquit professional development funding

Providers must acquit all funds received under the professional development and paid practicum subsidies by 31 July 2025.

If you got a subsidy in the 2023–24 financial year and **have not** completed your final acquittal, we have contacted you with more information.

If you got a subsidy in the 2024–25 financial year, you can acquit funding through the [grants portal](#).

Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

Share with families

Is your family prepared for winter? Flu vaccines now available.

It not only protects you but also helps protect those around you. It is free under the [National Immunisation Program](#) for people most at risk, including:

- children 6 months to less than 5 years
- pregnant women
- people aged 65 and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with certain medical conditions.

The best protection against influenza is to receive the vaccine each year. Talk to your health professional about booking in your family's flu vaccinations today.

Find more information and resources about influenza and the flu vaccine at [health.gov.au/flu](#).

News for families

The latest updates from Services Australia

Confirm your family income for Child Care Subsidy by 30 June

If you got Child Care Subsidy (CCS) in the 2023-24 financial year, you need to confirm your family income.

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



NSW floods: CCS period of emergency declared 19 to 23 May 2025

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 19 May 2025 to 23 May 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Maitland City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

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

For action

If you close your service, you must tell:

- us via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software
- your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Update your contact details via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software, including:

- your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System, so you don't miss important information
- your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care.

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.



Recovery after the emergency

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#). Read the eligibility criteria **before** applying.

Read more about [recovery after an emergency](#) on our website.

Families may be able to access:

- [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Other disaster support

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

Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).



From the department

Reporting prescribed discounts via session reports

From 7 July, you must include information on prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports. The reporting of non-prescribed discounts will be voluntary.

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances.
- provider discounts for a child of an educator or a cook that is employed by the provider
- provider discounts for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.

You will need to include the type and value of the prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports.

These changes:

- help us to better understand out of pocket costs experienced by families
- ensure that all prescribed discounts are reported within session reports to support compliance.

For more details on [prescribed third-party payments](#), visit our website.

Worker retention payment update

Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

Reminder: the ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment closes soon

In April, we emailed providers of services that were affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred with an offer to receive a \$10,000 support payment. The payment is one-off for eligible services only.

The deadline to accept the offer is 31 May 2025. Providers can accept the offer by completing a secure online form for any of their eligible services. You can find the link to access the online form in the email we sent providers.



Find out more about:

- [the ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred Support Payment](#)
- [payment and eligibility criteria](#).

Sector Spotlight

Resources to help you support children with disability

Did you know you can access a suite of resources to help understand your obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)?

The DDA supports children with disability to fully access and participate in early education.

All early childhood education and care (ECEC) services must comply with the DDA.

Tip sheets, information posters, and lots more are available on [ACECQA's website](#).

Find more on the [DDA and the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) on our website.

Influenza vaccination resources

Influenza can be very serious for children under 5 years and can lead to hospitalisation.

The best protection against influenza is to receive the vaccine each year. The vaccine is:

- safe
- effective
- free for children aged 6 months to under 5 years under the [National Immunisation Program](#).

You can help remind parents to book in their children's annual influenza vaccinations.

The Department of Health and Aged Care has mailed promotional material to early childhood services that encourages parents to protect their children against influenza by vaccinating.

Here are some ways you can help promote this important health message in your community:

- Display the poster throughout your service and promote the fact sheets available online. You can order or print hard copy [posters](#) and find the [fact sheets](#) at [health.gov.au/flu](#).
- Share information via email to encourage parents to book their child in for a free influenza vaccination.
- Share messaging on your social media channels to highlight the importance of vaccinating children against influenza. [Videos](#) about influenza in children are available for you to share via your channels.

Find more information and resources about influenza and the free vaccination for children under 5 years at [health.gov.au/flu](#).

StartingBlocks.gov.au now displays vacancies by day

We publish your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

The site has new functionality to display vacancy information by day. Previously, the site only displayed vacancies by age group and session type.



We remind you to keep your details up to date to ensure they display correctly on StartingBlocks.gov.au.

You must report:

- your current hourly or session fees before any subsidies, discounts or reductions
- any changes to your fees within 14 days of the change
- your current vacancies by 8 pm AEST/AEDT each Friday.

Including your detailed information helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

Facts from FAL

Electronic payment of gap fees

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

We conduct regular audits to check providers are taking all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically. If we contact you about an audit, you must respond promptly.

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

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

Understanding debt notices

We issue debt notices in certain circumstances.

You may receive a debt notice if you:

- change a session of care to fewer hours or days
- withdraw a session report
- act in a non-compliant way
- close or transfer ownership of a service retrospectively
- cease operating your service while offsetting is occurring.

We may also issue you with an infringement notice if the debt is due to non-compliance.

Read about [how to avoid debt](#) on our website.



Caring for close family members in Family Day Care



You cannot claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when an educator is caring for close family members.

This includes the educator's or their partner's:

- child, foster child, adopted child, kinship child or any child for which you have legal responsibility
- brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister.

Watch this video to learn about the rules for Family Day Care (FDC) educators who care for their own children or siblings and read more about [providing care for relatives](#) on our website.

From the department

Worker retention payment update

Apply now for backdated payments

Thinking about applying for the worker retention payment? Apply now to get backdated payments.

We'll backdate payments if you:

- apply by 30 June 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

We'll backdate payments to:

- 2 December 2024, for workplace instruments that cover the full grant period even if adopted later
- the date your workplace instrument starts, if this is after 2 December 2024.

Visit our website to:

- [find out more about the payment](#)
- [read our application guide.](#)

Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Attend an information session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

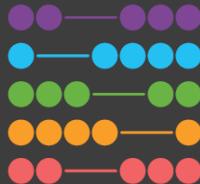
Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions.](#)



Sector spotlight

Spotlight on the sector – workforce



Early Childhood Education and Care
National Workforce Census

2024 National Report

The 2024 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) National Workforce Census found that:

- the total ECEC workforce size was 268,050 across all states and territories
- out of all paid contact staff in the ECEC workforce, 81.3% held a completed qualification in an ECEC field
- the ECEC workforce was 91.2% female in 2024.

Explore the results and find out more [on our website](#).

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month

May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. If one of your families is experiencing domestic violence, there are a few ways you can help.

- Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect may get Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing. For more information, read our guide on [Talking with the family](#).
- If paying the gap fee using EFT might put a person or family at risk of domestic violence, they may be eligible for an [exception](#).

If the child, a carer or an immediate member of the family is a victim of domestic violence, they may be eligible for [allowable and additional absences](#) at the start and end of an enrolment.

Intentional teaching and purposeful play boosts early education success

A new discussion paper from the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) highlights the importance of intentional teaching in ECEC. The new research shows that intentional teaching can significantly enhance learning outcomes. This is especially true for children experiencing disadvantage.

AERO CEO Dr Jenny Donovan said that intentional teaching and play-based learning have often been positioned in opposition to one another.

'Our research challenges that notion, showing that significant associations exist between educators and teachers intentionally supporting learning through play to achieve positive outcomes for the child.'

Access the discussion paper on [AERO's website](#).

Facts from FAL

How we support compliance

We undertake compliance activities to help to make sure Child Care Subsidy (CCS) goes to its intended beneficiaries – families.

Before we take compliance action, we give you:

- a notice of our intended action
- opportunity to provide written submissions.

In some instances, Family Assistance Law (FAL) allows us to take compliance action without giving notice. For example:

- where a provider's approval under National Law is suspended or cancelled
- when imposing additional conditions of approval.

Compliance action could include:

- issuing infringement notices
- imposing conditions on provider or service CCS approval
- issuing a debt
- suspending or cancelling your CCS approval
- seeking civil penalty orders
- criminal prosecutions.

Find out more about [how we support compliance](#) on our website.

Avoid common enrolment mistakes

You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS.

Here is how to avoid common mistakes when enrolling children.

Families should make a CCS claim first

Families should [lodge a CCS claim](#) before their child starts at your service.

If a child starts at your service before the family has lodged a claim, or while their claim is being assessed, you must charge full fees. If the family is assessed as eligible, CCS can be backdated up to 28 days from when the claim was made. Backdated CCS will be paid directly to the family.

Use the correct enrolment type

Except in very limited circumstances, children must be enrolled under a Complying Written Arrangement to get CCS payments.

Identify the person who made the CCS claim

Enrolment notices must identify the person who made the CCS claim. If you don't identify this person, we cannot make CCS payments.



Families must confirm the enrolment

Once you've submitted an enrolment, the family must confirm the details via their [Centrelink online account](#). CCS payments will not be made until the enrolment is confirmed.

Read more about [enrolling children](#).

Workforce support

Professional development subsidy payments

We are issuing payments for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies this month.

If you were successful in the recent round, you can expect your payment soon.

We'll send payments to each eligible service's bank account. Your grant agreement has more details, including how you may use the subsidy.

Once you have used the subsidy, you need to acquit your funding. You must do this by 31 July 2025.

Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

Join the practicum exchange network

Early childhood educators in training are searching the practicum exchange network for their next practicum opportunity.

Register your service to:

- list practicum opportunities
- search for educators in your area
- connect and arrange practicums.

Go to the [practicum exchange network](#).



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

From the department

Worker retention payment update

We've made it easier to apply

We've heard your feedback and are making it easier to apply for the worker retention payment.

We are now asking you for less information. This will:

- make it easier for you to apply
- help us process applications quicker
- enable faster delivery of grant agreements.

If you've already applied:

- you will benefit from the streamlined process
- your application will move to the new system
- you don't need to do anything.

If you would like to apply, see our application guide to find out what's required.

Thank you to those who provided feedback. We appreciate your patience as we process applications.

If you would like to apply, see our [application guide](#) to find out what's required.

Thank you to those who provided feedback. We appreciate your patience as we process applications.

Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).



Sector spotlight

National child safety review – have your say

Have your say on the possible changes to make education and care services even safer for children.

Approved providers and services, educators, staff, volunteers and families are invited to [provide feedback](#) on proposed policy options under the National Quality Framework.

Deloitte Access Economics is managing the consultation process on behalf of all governments.

Public consultation on regulatory and non-regulatory policy options is open until 11 June 2025. Surveys and submissions will be open from 5 May 2025.

The government is currently in a caretaker period and any decisions will be subject to consideration by an incoming government.

State and territory information webinars are being held virtually and these sessions will be open to anyone. You can register for a session at [Child Safety Review Public Consultation](#).

Read more in our [announcement](#).

Facts from FAL

Calendar year reporting deadline for some large providers is tomorrow

Large providers must report financial information to the department each year, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that currently or plans to operate, or share operation of, 25 or more services.

If you do your financial reporting on the calendar year, the deadline is tomorrow.

Complete the [2024 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by 1 May 2025.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. Please make sure that you include financial statements and the information that is required in the important information tab.

Learn more about [financial reporting obligations for large providers](#).

Know your obligations: working with children checks

All providers have obligations regarding working with children checks (WWCCs) under both state and territory law and Family Assistance Law.

You must:

- ensure any person required by state or territory law to hold a WWCC has a current check
- notify some checks in the Child Care Subsidy System within specific timeframes
- notify changes to checks in the Child Care Subsidy System within specific timeframes



- keep records of all checks and provide these to us on request
- notify new checks within 7 days
- notify changes to existing checks within 24 hours.

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

Learn more [how to manage your WWCC obligations](#) on our website.

Balance of allowable absences

Some families have used their 42 allowable absences by this time of year. If you are noticing that absences are not paying when submitting session reports, check the family's absence count.

Allowable absences will reset on 1 July 2025.

You can view the year-to-date absence count for a child via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Families can find out more about absences on [Services Australia](#) website and check their year-to-date absence count:

- in their Centrelink online account via [myGov](#)
- on the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

Learn more about [absences from child care](#) on our website.

Workforce support

How to acquit professional development subsidies

If you got a subsidy in 2023–24

Most providers who got a subsidy in the 2023–24 financial year have already completed their final acquittal.

If you haven't, you must do so by 31 July 2025. We are contacting these providers with detailed instructions.

If you got a subsidy in 2024–25

All providers who got a subsidy in the 2024–25 financial year must acquit funding through the [grants portal](#) by 31 July 2025.

Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

Be You Fundamentals event

Join Be You for a webinar on transforming educator wellbeing to create a thriving workplace.

This Be You Fundamentals event will focus on how workplace culture and leadership contribute to educator wellbeing. The event will also explore examples of practice that create and sustain a thriving workplace.

The session will take place online at 12 pm AEST on 8 May 2025.



[Register for the webinar.](#)

Learn with Geccko



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From the department

Worker retention payment update

Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

CCS Provider Helpdesk closed on Anzac Day

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed on Friday for the Anzac Day public holiday.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEST on Monday 28 April.

You can email the helpdesk anytime at CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Reporting prescribed discounts via session reports

From 7 July, you must include information on prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports. Reporting non-prescribed discounts will be voluntary.

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances
- provider discounts for a child of an educator or a cook who is employed by the provider
- provider discounts for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.

You will need to include the type and value of the prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports.



These changes:

- help us to better understand out of pocket costs experienced by families
- ensure that all prescribed discounts are reported within session reports to support compliance.

For more details on [prescribed third-party payments](#) and to view a [factsheet](#), visit our website.

Sector spotlight

National Workforce Census results: Key findings for preschools

The 2024 ECEC National Workforce Census found that:

- 62.1% of children attending preschool programs at dedicated preschools were aged between 4 and 5 years old
- 95.2% of dedicated preschools based their program on Australia's national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), either solely or in combination with another framework
- in 93.7% of dedicated preschools the preschool program was mainly delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in person.

Explore the [National Workforce Census results](#) on our website.

Facts from FAL

How to manage session reports

You must submit accurate session reports on time. Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

Read the guide on our website to learn about:

- how to submit session reports in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS), via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software
- what to include in session reports, and
- updating session reports if you've made a mistake or the session report is incorrect.

You can learn more about submitting accurate session reports by:

- reading how to [manage session reports](#) on our website
- completing the Reporting session of care course in [Geccko](#).

Keep your fee information up to date

It is important that information about fees is available to families. We publish this information to [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

You must tell us:

- your current hourly or session fees before CCS, discounts, or reductions are applied
- any changes to fees, within 14 days of the fee change



- twice a year – after the end of the financial year and calendar year, including reporting no change in fees.

You can notify us of your current fees in the CCSS via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

Learn more about keeping fee information updated by:

- reading about how to [notify us of fees](#) on our website
- completing the Accurate fee reporting course in [Geccko](#).

Workforce support

How you can benefit from the practicum exchange network

Host student educators and bring fresh perspectives to your service. The practicum exchange network makes finding students simple.

Register your service on the network to:

- access enthusiastic educators in training
- simplify your placement process
- help shape the next generation of educators.

Registering is easy and only takes a few minutes.

Go to the [practicum exchange network](#) and register today.



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Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency expanded to 10 additional LGAs

We've added 10 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 17 April 2025 in the following LGAs:

- **Balonne Shire Council**
- **Burke Shire Council**
- **Carpentaria Shire Council**
- **Charters Towers Regional Council**
- **Cloncurry Shire Council**
- **Croydon Shire Council**
- **Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Etheridge Shire Council**
- **Mount Isa City Council**
- **Barcaldine Regional Council**
- **Blackall-Tambo Regional Council**
- **Maranoa Regional Council**
- **Richmond Shire Council**
- **Burdekin Shire Council**
- **Central Highlands Regional Council**
- **Flinders Shire Council**
- **Paroo Shire Council**
- **Murweh Shire Council**
- **Barcoo Shire Council**
- **Boulia Shire Council**
- **Bulloo Shire Council**
- **Diamantina Shire Council**
- **Longreach Regional Council**
- **Quilpie Shire Council**
- **Winton Shire Council.**



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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

For action

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



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

From the department

Worker retention payment update

Get free support

We're funding organisations to help you understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the [worker retention payment](#).

The organisations were selected based on their:

- knowledge of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector, and
- understanding of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

CCS Provider Helpdesk closed for Easter

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Provider Helpdesk will be closed on Friday 18 April and Monday 21 April for the holiday period.

The helpdesk will reopen at 9 am AEST next Tuesday 22 April.

You can email the helpdesk anytime at CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Facts from FAL

Public holiday absences

On public holidays, you can report an absence if your service would have been open otherwise.

For example:



- a service that is open on Mondays can report absences for a public holiday on a Monday
- a service that only operates from Wednesday to Friday cannot report absences for a public holiday on a Monday.

You can only report absences and charge families for children who would have normally attended care on that day. This will be considered an allowable absence and will be deducted from a family's 42 allowable absences.

If you do report an absence for a public holiday, you must still collect the gap fee from families.

Once a family has used their 42 allowable absence days, they cannot claim a public holiday as an additional absence reason.

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

Calendar reporting deadline for some large providers is 1 May

Large providers must report financial information to the department each year, including information about revenue, profits and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that currently or plans to operate, or share operation of, 25 or more services.

If you do your financial reporting on the calendar year, the deadline is on 1 May 2025.

Complete the [2024 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by the deadline.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. Please make sure that you include financial statements and the information that is required in the important information tab.

Learn more about [financial reporting obligations for large providers](#).

Workforce support

Professional development subsidy offers

Did you apply for a professional development or paid practicum subsidy? We have notified applicants of the outcome of their application.

Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement and outcome letter. Please respond accordingly. Payments are expected to be made in May.

Those who were unsuccessful in this round have also been informed.

We appreciate the time and effort invested by all who applied. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to strengthening the skills and experience of your staff.

Keep an eye on our website for [information about future rounds](#).



ECEC videos

Watch short videos about key topics on our YouTube channel



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency extended

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 24 March 2025 to 17 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Blackall-Tambo Regional Council
- Maranoa Regional Council
- Richmond Shire Council
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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



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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

For action

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



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From the department

Invitations to apply for ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment

We have emailed providers affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred with an offer to receive the one-off \$10,000 support payment for their eligible services.

If you have a service in an affected local government area (LGA), check your email for your payment offer. Providers can accept the offer by completing a secure online form for any services that meet the eligibility criteria.

Services are eligible if they:

- are CCS-approved
- are in an LGA covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

Learn more about the [payment and eligibility criteria](#) on our website.

Not all providers that receive the offer will have services that meet the eligibility criteria. If you receive an offer for a service that does not meet the eligibility criteria, you do not need to complete the online form for that service.

How and when will payments be made?

The payment will be made after providers complete and submit online forms for any services that meet all the eligibility criteria.

The payment will be paid directly to each service found eligible through the offer and acceptance process. It will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for a service in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). This is the same account used to pay CCS. Services should ensure their bank account details are up to date in the CCSS.

What if I haven't received an email offering the support payment?

Emails have been sent to the email address registered for your provider in the CCSS.

If you have services in the affected LGAs and haven't received an email offering the payment, you should:

- check the email address for your provider registered in CCSS via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software
- update your provider email address if you don't have one registered or it is out of date
- check your junk mail
- contact the helpdesk at CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au.

Find out more about the [ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred Support Payment](#).



Worker retention payment update

Get free support

Help is available at every stage of the worker retention payment.

Get help:

- understanding the payment
- developing a compliant workplace instrument
- preparing your application
- implementing the payment at your service
- complying with the payment conditions, and more.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

CCS period of emergency

A CCS period of emergency is in place in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

Visit our website to see:

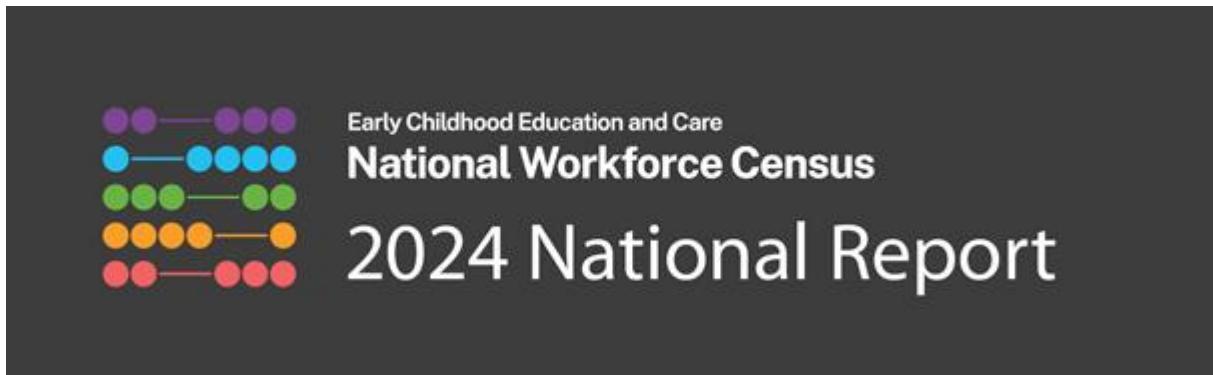
- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

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



Sector spotlight

National Workforce Census results – children



The 2024 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) National Workforce Census (NWC) results have been released.

From the 1.4 million children who attended CCS services in the reference week, the NWC found that:

- 19.3% spoke a language other than English at home, or had parents who spoke another language
- more than 65,000 were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children – 4.4% of all children attending CCS services nationally, an increase from 3.8% in 2021 and 3.0% in 2016
- 6.3% of children aged 0 to 12 years had an underlying health condition lasting longer than 6 months.

Explore the [2024 National Workforce Census results](#).

Facts from FAL

Understanding inducements and advertising at your service

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

ECEC providers may not offer inducements that are financial or not directly associated with the quality or provision of education or care services.

You can:

- offer discounted or free care
- advertise your service and offer free site visits or trial periods
- issue marketing merchandise to the value of \$30 per complying written arrangement
- include extra-curricular activities as part of a session fee
- advertise your social impact through activities like donations to a charity
- transport to or from your service, if this is part of your normal business practice.

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



- putting conditions on your approval
- suspending or cancelling your approval.

Read about [inducements and advertising at your service](#) on our website.

Updating enrolments in the CCSS

When your care arrangements for children change, they must be recorded.

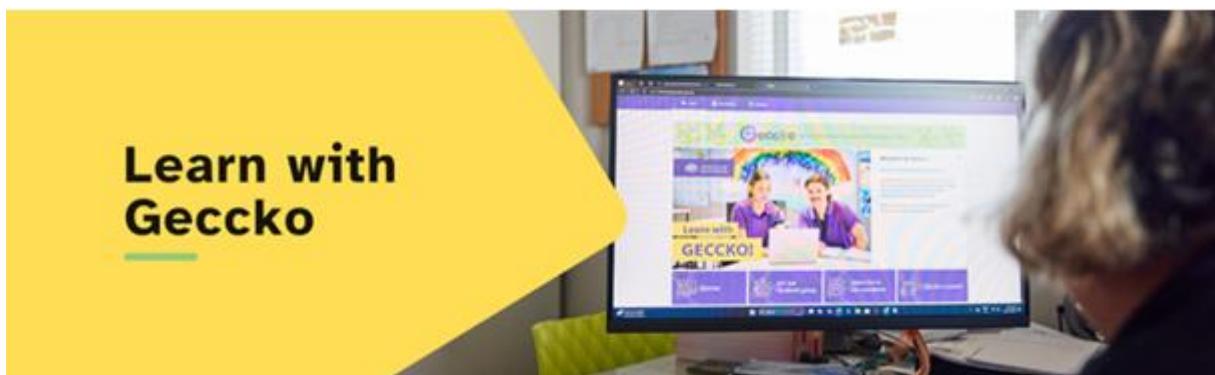
Update an enrolment notice in the CCSS when:

- the family disagrees with details of an enrolment and you agree an update is required
- the care arrangement between you and the family changes
- you realise the information in an enrolment is incorrect
- the care arrangement ends.

When any of these events occur, the enrolment notice must be updated within 7 days.

Find a task card in the [provider tool kit](#) for help with updating enrolments in the [PEP](#).

Read more about [how to enrol children](#) on our website.



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Queensland floods: 3 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added 3 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 11 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Blackall-Tambo Regional Council**
- **Maranoa Regional Council**
- **Richmond Shire Council**
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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



Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
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Invitations to apply for ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment

We have emailed providers affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred with an offer to receive the one-off \$10,000 support payment for their eligible services.

If you have a service in an affected local government area (LGA), check your email for your payment offer. Providers can accept the offer by completing a secure online form for any services that meet the eligibility criteria.

Services are eligible if they:

- are CCS-approved
- are in an LGA covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred (these LGAs are listed at the end of this email)
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agreed to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

Learn more about the [payment and eligibility criteria](#).

Not all providers that receive the offer will have services that meet the eligibility criteria. If you receive an offer for a service that does not meet the eligibility criteria, you do not need to complete the online form for that service.

How and when will payments be made?

The payment will be made after providers complete and submit online forms for any services that meet all the eligibility criteria.

The payment will be paid directly to each service found eligible through the offer and acceptance process. It will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for a service in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). This is the same account used to pay CCS. Services should ensure their bank account details are up to date in the CCSS.

What if I haven't received an email offering the support payment?

Emails have been sent to the email address registered for your provider in the CCSS.

If you have services in the affected LGAs and haven't received an email offering the payment, you should:

- check the email address for your provider registered in CCSS via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software
- update your provider email address if you don't have one registered or it is out of date
- check your junk mail
- contact the helpdesk at CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au.

Which LGAs are covered by the period of emergency?

The CCS period of emergency applied from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

Queensland

- Livingstone Shire Council
- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire



- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

Find out more about the [ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred Support Payment](#).



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Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency extended

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 24 March 2025 to 11 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences

- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

For action

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



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

NSW floods: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Narrabri Shire Council local government area in New South Wales due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 31 March 2025 to 8 April 2025.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

From the department

Providing a statement of tax record for Child Care Subsidy approval

From 1 April 2025, new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provider approval applicants need to give us a statement of tax record (STR).

The provider must supply the STR. Applicants will need to:

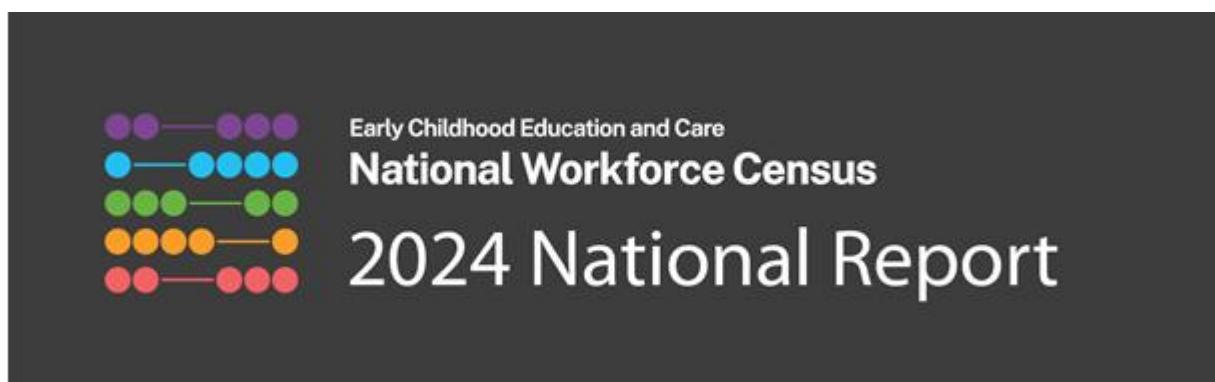
- request and obtain the required STR for their organisation from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- provide the STR as part of their application for CCS approval.

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

You can request an STR from the ATO using ATO online services or through your registered tax professional. To request an STR, visit the [ATO website](#).

Find out more about who needs to provide an [STR for your business structure](#) on our website.

2024 National Workforce Census results released this week



We surveyed more than 18,000 early childhood education and care (ECEC) services across Australia, including more than 2,000 dedicated preschools. This covers 97% of all CCS-approved services in Australia.

The 2024 National Workforce Census (NWC) National Report gives an overview of the key data on ECEC services and workers.

The NWC is the only national census of its type in Australia. The NWC aims to improve the quality of information used in developing and measuring early childhood policy and programs.

A report with more detailed tables of information will be published later in 2025.

Explore the results and find out more [on our website](#).



Worker retention payment update

Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for, and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find free support that meets your needs.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

Transferring or acquiring a service

Find out what you need to do if you transfer or acquire a service while getting the worker retention payment.

Transferring a service

If you transfer a service to another provider, you will stop getting funding for that service.

You will continue to get funding for your other eligible services. If you don't have any other eligible services, we will terminate your grant agreement.

If you transfer the service to a provider who does not get the worker retention payment, the service will not be eligible unless the provider applies for the funding.

Acquiring a service

If you acquire a service from another provider, you can get the worker retention payment for that service if it meets the conditions of your grant agreement. This includes the fee growth cap. We check service fees regularly to ensure compliance.

What you need to do

In both cases, you must tell us about the change. You can do this by emailing ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

We will send you a grant variation to reflect the change.

You must also comply with your [CCS approval obligations when buying or selling a service](#).

Learn more about the [worker retention payment](#) on our website.

Latest Child Care Subsidy data now available

We've published data about the CCS in the December quarter 2024.

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

Key findings from the December quarter 2024 include:

- 1,447,460 children from 1,016,920 families used CCS-approved care



- 15,051 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 27.4 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$13.15
- the Australian Government paid \$3.89 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [December quarter 2024 report](#).

CCS period of emergency in Queensland

A CCS period of emergency is in place in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Sector spotlight

Professional development opportunities survey closing soon

Share your feedback on the professional development opportunities before the deadline on Monday.

We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).

If you have accessed this support and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

Your responses will be treated as private and confidential.

The survey closes **6 pm AEST 7 April 2025**.

Facts from FAL

Passing payments on to families

You must pass payments on to families as a fee reduction within 14 days of receiving it.

If you cannot pass on a payment within this timeframe, you must pay it back to Services Australia via the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). Failure to pass payments on to families may result in compliance action.

You must also provide a statement of entitlement to families who get CCS every fortnight.

A statement of entitlement must include:

- the recipient's name
- the child's or children's names
- enrolment identifiers
- issue date



- period start and end dates
- provider and service details (including names, ABNs and identifiers)
- session details, including session start and end times, and absences used during the statement period and year to date
- fees, including the hourly session fee, the daily and weekly total amount of all fees charged, and any discounts or refunds applied
- fee reduction amounts
- actual attendance times.

Find out more about [managing payments and fees](#) on our website.

Financial reporting deadline for some large providers is 1 May

Large providers must report financial information, including information about revenue, profits and leasing arrangements, to the department.

Following changes to the *Minister's Rules 2017* in July 2024, the deadline for large providers who report on the calendar year now occurs on 1 May.

Complete the [2024 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au by 1 May 2025.

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

If you report on a financial year, your deadline will fall on 1 November 2025. We'll provide more information about what you need to do closer to the deadline.

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

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

Workforce support

How to use the practicum exchange network

Have you joined the practicum exchange network? Registering is easy and only takes a few minutes.

On the network you can:

- search for services and educators with availability in your area
- connect with each other
- arrange practicums.

Here's how to make the most out of the network:

1. Register: create a profile to get started
2. Search: find services or educators in your area



3. Enquire: send and receive requests for practicums
4. Confirm: exchange contact details and arrange a practicum.

Go to the [practicum exchange network](#).

Be You In Practice webinar

Join Be You for a webinar on fostering collegial relationships to support educator wellbeing.

This Be You In Practice event will explore how intentional and purposeful workplace planning which support positive collegial relationships are fundamental to educator wellbeing.

The session will take place online at 4:30 pm AEST on 8 April 2025.

[Register for the webinar](#).



1 April 2025

The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

Queensland floods: 5 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added an extra 5 local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 7 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Burdekin Shire Council**
- **Central Highlands Regional Council**
- **Flinders Shire Council**
- **Paroo Shire Council**
- **Murweh Shire Council**
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support



- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
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Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency extended

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 24 March 2025 to 7 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).



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The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the Guidance on Caretaker Conventions, pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 31 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after an emergency

The following support may help you recover after an emergency:

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

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- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
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- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



From the department

Budget 2025–26: support for services and families affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

The 2025–26 Budget continues to build a better and fairer education system and prioritise support for Australian families and students of all ages.

The Australian Government has activated \$2.5 million in additional support for families and early childhood education and child care providers affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment of \$10,000 will be available for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services that:

- are in a local government area (LGA) covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

This payment will ensure services are not financially disadvantaged because they had to close for an extended period due to the cyclone and associated flooding.

Families who need extra help with the cost of child care may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(ACCS\) temporary financial hardship](#) which usually covers the full cost of child care for up to 100 hours of care per fortnight, for up to 13 weeks.

Read more in the [announcement](#).

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment coming soon

We will start contacting providers that have services in the [affected LGAs](#) soon to invite them to apply via a secure online application form.

Applications will be emailed to the provider-level email addresses registered in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). Providers with more than one service in the affected LGAs may need to complete more than one application form.

Please ensure you have updated your contact details in the CCSS via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

How and when will payments be made?

The payment can be made after providers complete and submit application forms for any services they think meet all the eligibility criteria. We will notify providers that submit the form to confirm which of their services are eligible to receive the payment.

The payment will be paid directly to each service found eligible through the application process.

The payment will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for a service in the CCSS, which is the same account used to pay CCS. Services should ensure their bank account details are up to date in the CCSS.



Read more about the [payment and answers to FAQs](#) on our website.

Worker retention payment update

Get free support

Help is available to engage with the worker retention payment.

Support includes:

- help to understand, develop and implement a workplace instrument
- help to submit your application
- help to request an alternative fee growth cap or funding review
- administration, record-keeping and payroll support
- workplace relations or legal advice
- online information sessions
- helplines, and more.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

Reminder for CCCF grant recipients

A reminder that grants under round 4 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) disadvantaged and vulnerable communities grant are transitioning to the [Community Grants Hub](#).

Grants that include capital support have already transitioned. All remaining grants will transition from Monday.

You don't need to do anything. The Community Grants Hub will contact you once your grant has been transferred.

CCS period of emergency in North Queensland

A CCS period of emergency was in place in parts of North Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

Visit our website to see:

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

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



Sector spotlight

Partnership Agreement with SNAICC signed

Earlier this month, the department signed a Partnership Agreement with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (SNAICC) to transform the way we work together.

The [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) acknowledges the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the importance of working in partnership to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through the early years.

Our new Partnership Agreement builds on commitments in the National Agreement, including to develop a fundamentally new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It affirms SNAICC will share decision making with the department on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the early years.

Visit our website to [read the Partnership Agreement](#).

Have your say on professional development opportunities

Thank you for your feedback on our professional development opportunities.

We'd love to hear more – our survey will now close at 6 pm AEST 7 April 2025.

If you have accessed our professional development opportunities and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It is open to representatives from all service types.

Participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated as private and confidential.

Facts from FAL

What can an infringement notice be issued for?

We monitor providers to make sure they follow the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL). We can issue infringement notices, or fines, when they don't follow the rules.

There are many FAL obligations that contain a civil penalty offence for which we can issue an infringement notice.

Some examples include:

- not updating the status of a current working with children check (WWCC)
- not correctly recording persons with management or control
- not submitting enrolment notices or session reports on time
- not passing on or remitting a fee reduction amount
- not correctly reporting your fee information
- failure to notify the correct agency of a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.



Find more information and what to do if you receive an [infringement notice](#) on our website.

How we manage overpayments

An overpayment is when you receive more CCS than you're entitled to.

Overpayments can happen when you withdraw or change a session report, such as recording fewer hours of care.

We use your future CCS payments to pay back the overpayment. This is called offsetting. You can see if offsetting has occurred in your payment advice in the CCSS.

We won't take more than 50% of any single future payment, unless agreed otherwise.

You must pass on the full entitlement to families, even if your CCS payments have been reduced by offsetting.

Read more about [how to manage overpayments and debt](#) on our website.

New Geccko course: Managing absences

Our new short course on Managing absences will help improve your understanding of the different types of absences from child care and help you comply with your obligations under FAL.

You can register for this course on Geccko, our online learning platform for the ECEC sector.

The course will help you:

- identify an allowable absence for CCS
- explain when an additional absence may be granted
- define emergency absences
- explain absences at the start or end of an enrolment.

The course should take 20 minutes to complete and you can:

- login using your tablet, laptop, or mobile phone
- download course certificates upon completion
- access other resources such as videos and tip sheets.

[Find out more and register for Geccko](#) to access the course.

Workforce support

Be You wellbeing webinars

Join Be You for two upcoming webinars on children's wellbeing.

Attend a panel discussion about taking the first steps to enhance wellbeing at 3.30 pm AEDT on 27 March 2025.

Join the Be You Fundamentals event focused on observing to provide early support for children's wellbeing at 12 pm AEDT on 2 April 2025.

[Register for these events.](#)





ECEC videos

Watch short videos about key topics on our YouTube channel



Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred: new LGA added to CCS period of emergency

We've added one new local government area (LGA) to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

Queensland

- Livingstone Shire Council
- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour



- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



North Qld floods: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of North Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 17 March 2025 to 24 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Townsville City Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after an emergency

The following support may help you recover after an emergency:

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



From the department

One-off payment for services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

The Australian Government will provide a one-off \$10,000 payment to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment will be available for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services that:

- are in a local government area (LGA) covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

The payment will be available to all service types, including Centre Based Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care.

We will provide more information to providers of services in the affected LGAs soon.

To make sure we know if your service is in one of the affected LGAs, please ensure you have updated your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

See our website for more information on the:

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

Support for families

Families in affected regions can receive unlimited additional absences. This means they will not exhaust their ordinary allocation of subsidised absences for the year as a result of the emergency.

Worker retention payment update

Get free support

Help is available to engage with the worker retention payment.

Support includes:

- help to understand, develop and implement a workplace instrument
- help to submit your application
- help to request an alternative fee growth cap or funding review
- administration, record-keeping and payroll support
- workplace relations or legal advice
- online information sessions



- helplines, and more.

Search the directory on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

Have your say on professional development opportunities

We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).

Participation is voluntary. The survey will close on 31 March 2025.

[Complete the survey](#).

Sector spotlight

Prepare for changes to fit and proper person requirements

From 1 April 2025, new CCS provider approval applicants will need to give us a statement of tax record (STR).

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

Providers will be able to request an STR from the ATO:

- by using [ATO online services](#)
- through their registered tax professional.

Visit our website for more information on how to prepare for [STR for CCS](#).

Facts from FAL

Absences during a period of emergency

During a period of emergency, families won't have to use their annual allocation of allowable absences.

Children who live or attend a service in an [affected region](#) will get extra allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

These absences will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System if we declare a period of emergency.



After a period of emergency, families may receive additional absences if they have exhausted their annual allocation of allowable absences.

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

Enrolments: you and the family must agree on care arrangements

Before enrolling a child, you must come to an agreement with the family on care arrangements for the child.

The most common care arrangement for children who get CCS is a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA).

Families must agree to the care arrangements in writing. They can do this electronically or in hard copy.

Read more about CWAs and [how to enrol children](#) on our website.

Caring for extended family in Family Day Care



If you work in Family Day Care (FDC), there are rules you must follow when caring for extended family members.

Extended family members include a FDC educator's or their partner's:

- niece/nephew
- cousin
- grandchild, or
- great-grandchild.

You may be able to report CCS eligible sessions when FDC educators are caring for extended family members, but you must follow the 'less than 50% rule'.

Watch this video to find out how to calculate the less than 50% rule and read more about [providing care for relatives](#).

Workforce support

Be You In Practice webinar

Join Be You for a webinar on nurturing family partnerships through effective communication.



This Be You In Practice event will explore how educators can use communication to develop meaningful partnerships and make a positive impact on children's mental health.

The session will take place online at 12 pm AEDT on 20 March 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)



One-off payment for services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

The Australian Government will provide a one-off \$10,000 payment to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment will be available for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services that:

- are in a local government area (LGA) covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#)
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

The payment will be available to all service types, including Centre Based Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care.

We will provide more information to providers of services in the affected LGAs soon.

To make sure we know if your service is in one of the affected LGAs, please ensure you have updated your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

See our website for more information on the:

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

Support for families

Families in affected regions can receive unlimited additional absences. This means they will not exhaust their ordinary allocation of subsidised absences for the year as a result of the emergency.

Two new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added 2 new local government areas (LGAs) to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

Queensland

- **Bundaberg Regional Council**
- **Southern Downs Regional Council**
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council



- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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



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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred: CCS period of emergency extended

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

Queensland

- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council



- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



From the department

CCS period of emergency in NSW and Qld

A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place in parts of New South Wales and Queensland due to the impact of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Worker retention payment update

Understanding funding amounts

We intend for all participating providers to get sufficient funding through the worker retention payment.

If you participate, you will get funding to cover:

- a 10% wage increase for all eligible staff in the first year
- an additional 5% wage increase for all eligible staff in the second year
- at least an extra 20% for eligible on-costs, calculated against your base funding.

You can also:

- apply for a payment to cover accrued historical leave liabilities that increased because of the wage increase
- request a funding review if you believe the standard payment calculation method is not appropriate.

For most providers, the standard payment will cover the full cost of the wage increase and associated on-costs. If you apply for a funding review and are found eligible, you will get a top up payment.

See our [application guide](#) and find out [how to request a funding review](#) on our website.

Access free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

Support includes:

- help to understand, develop and implement a workplace instrument
- help to submit your application
- help to request an alternative fee growth cap or funding review
- administration, record-keeping and payroll support
- workplace relations or legal advice



- online information sessions
- helplines, and more.

Search the directory on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#)

Privacy obligations when collecting personal information

You must tell families if you collect their personal information. You must take reasonable steps to ensure families are aware.

You collect personal information from families when you enrol children. You then share this information with us so they can get CCS.

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

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

So that families can get CCS, we need to:

- collect their personal information
- share this information with other government departments, like Services Australia.

Make sure that families understand that we cannot provide CCS without their permission for you to share information with us.

You must also take reasonable steps to protect the personal information that you hold about families. This includes keeping families' information safe from loss, unauthorised access, use, modification, disclosure or misuse.

Read more about:

- your [privacy obligations](#)
- how we handle personal information in our [privacy policy](#)
- the [Australian Privacy Principles](#).



Sector spotlight

Have your say on professional development opportunities

Do you have feedback on our professional development opportunities?

We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).

If you have accessed this support and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It is open to representatives from all service types.

Participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated as private and confidential.

The survey will close on 31 March 2025.

Please contact SPS@education.gov.au if you have any questions.

Facts from FAL

What to include in session reports

You must submit a session report for each child at your service, for each week a session of care is provided.

If a child has more than one enrolment, such as a child whose parents are separated, you must submit a weekly session report for each enrolment.

Session reports must include:

- date
- times
- absences
- fee information
- educator details
- preschool information.

Read the how to guide for [managing session reports](#) on our website.

Gap fee audits

We conduct regular audits to check providers are taking all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically.

We conduct audits by either:

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

If we contact you about an audit, you must respond promptly. We may request additional documents and statements regarding the collection of gap fees during an audit.

Collecting gap fees from families using electronic funds transfer is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.



Read more about:

- [what to do if you get a section 158 notice](#)
- [guidance on collecting gap fees.](#)

Workforce support

Professional development subsidies close Friday



Applications for our professional development subsidies close on Friday.

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training. The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Practicum exchange living allowance applications closing

Applications for the practicum exchange living allowance close on Friday.

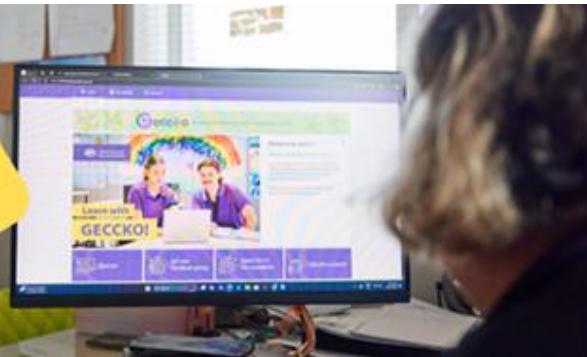
The practicum exchange network is a dedicated website connecting early childhood education and care services and educators in training.

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area other than their home location.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

**Learn with
Geccko**



Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred: CCS period of emergency extended, new areas added

We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. We've also added another 3 local government areas (LGAs).

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 5 to 14 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

Queensland

- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council



- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region



Tropical Cyclone Alfred: 4 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added an extra 4 local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

Queensland

- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- **Dungog Shire Council**
- **Kempsey Shire Council**
- **MidCoast Council**
- **Port Macquarie-Hastings Council**
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire



- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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

Tropical Cyclone Alfred: 7 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added an extra 7 local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

Queensland

- **Fraser Coast Regional Council**
- **Somerset Regional Council**
- **Toowoomba Regional Council**
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- **City of Coffs Harbour**
- **Bellingen Shire Council**
- **Kyogle Council**
- **Nambucca Valley Council**
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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



Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



Tropical Cyclone Alfred: new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added extra local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

Queensland

- **Scenic Rim Regional Council**
- **Lockyer Valley Regional Council**
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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



Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



From the department

Worker retention payment update

Need help with the worker retention payment?

You can get help to engage with the worker retention payment.

We've updated the [help directory on our website](#) with the latest support on offer.

This includes help to:

- understand the payment and its requirements
- develop a compliant workplace instrument
- submit a complete application
- get workplace relations or legal advice, and more.

Support is free.

We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website. Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements.

Backdating payments

We appreciate your patience as we process worker retention payment applications.

We will backdate your payments if you:

- submit a complete application by 30 June 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

We will backdate payments to:

- 2 December 2024, for workplace instruments that cover the full grant period even if adopted later
- the date your workplace instrument starts, if this is after 2 December 2024.

Some providers may attempt to form or join a workplace instrument before 30 June 2025, but may not be approved until after the deadline. In this scenario, we may backdate payments provided you submit a complete application by 30 June 2025 that indicates you are awaiting approval.

Visit our website to see [examples of how we will backdate payments](#).

Please be assured we are working to assess applications as quickly as possible.

CCS Provider Helpdesk closed on Monday

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday on Monday 10 March.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEDT on Tuesday 11 March.



You can email the helpdesk anytime at CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

CCS period of emergency in Qld and NSW

A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Facts from FAL

Submit a tip-off if you suspect CCS fraud

If you suspect a child care provider or service is not following the rules, you can tell us.

Some examples of CCS fraud are:

- claiming false absences
- offering banned incentives to secure enrolments
- accepting cash payments
- [claiming CCS for types of care where CCS is not payable.](#)

Our online [CCS fraud tip-off form](#) is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to complete.

Salary sacrificing early childhood education and care fees

Do you have families who pay their early childhood education and care fees through salary sacrifice? Make sure you're reporting their fees correctly.

Salary sacrificing is considered a third-party payment. There are rules you must follow when a third party contributes to a family's fees.

Generally, when a third party helps a family pay its early childhood education and care fees, you must deduct the contribution from the total session fee.

The family's CCS rate will then be applied to the reduced session fee. This is because families are only entitled to CCS in relation to the amount they have to pay after any third-party payments.

The family must still pay a gap fee.

We have [examples on our website](#) to help you understand how to report different types of third-party payments. We have published a new example about salary sacrificing.

Read more about third-party payments [on our website](#).



Workforce support

Have your say on professional development opportunities

Has your service accessed any of our professional development opportunities? Tell us about your experience.

We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).

This includes the:

- professional development subsidy
- paid practicum subsidy
- practicum exchange network
- practicum exchange living allowance.

If you have used any of these supports and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

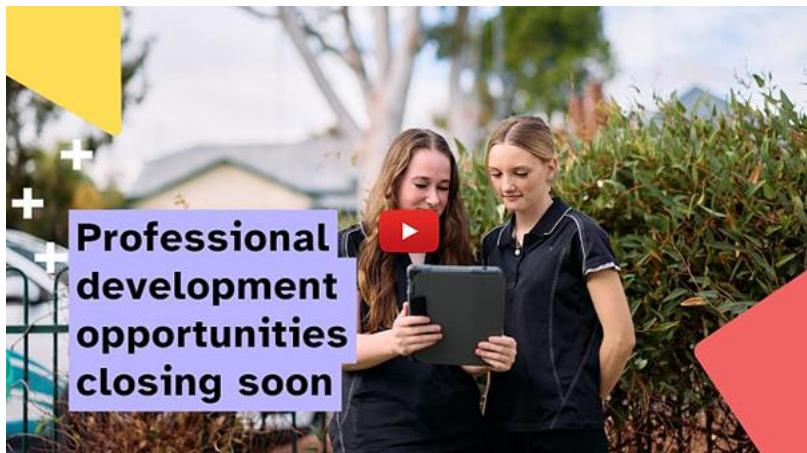
The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It is open to representatives from all service types.

Participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated as private and confidential.

The survey will close on 31 March 2025.

Please contact SPS@education.gov.au if you have any questions.

Professional development subsidies closing soon



Applications for our professional development subsidies are closing soon.

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training.

The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).



ECEC videos

Watch short videos about key topics on our YouTube channel



Tropical Cyclone Alfred: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

Queensland

- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

New South Wales

- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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



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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



From the department

ECEC supported bargaining agreement update

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) is processing applications to join the early childhood education and care (ECEC) multi-employer enterprise agreement.

The ECEC multi-employer enterprise agreement is a type of workplace instrument. It meets the worker retention payment requirements.

Providers can apply to join the agreement. This is known as a variation.

FWC must approve the variation and is now processing applications on a monthly schedule.

Each month, FWC will publish one decision that covers all applications received before the cut-off date for that month.

Applications received after the cut-off date will be considered in the next month's decision.

FWC approved the first applications on 28 January 2025. This adds new employers and their employees to the agreement.

Visit the [Fair Work Commission](#) website to:

- read the agreement
- apply to join the agreement
- see the application cut-off and decision dates
- see variations in progress
- see approved variations.

Need help with your workplace instrument?

Support is available now. This includes help to join the ECEC multi-employer enterprise agreement or develop your own compliant workplace instrument.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

CCS period of emergency extended

We've extended the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

Visit our website to see:

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

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



Sector spotlight

Changes to fit and proper person requirements coming soon

From 1 April 2025, new CCS provider approval applicants will need to provide a statement of tax record (STR).

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

The provider must supply the STR. Applicants will need to:

- request and obtain the required STR for their organisation from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- provide the STR as part of their application for CCS approval.

Providers will be able to request an STR from the ATO:

- by using [ATO online services](#)
- through their registered tax professional.

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

Facts from FAL

Can families travelling overseas get CCS?

Generally, Australian Government payments are not payable while the recipient is overseas. Government payments are for families who live and work in Australia.

To remain eligible for CCS, a family must meet residency requirements. This means:

- payments will stop when a family leaves Australia to live in another country
- payments will stop if a family travels overseas for 6 weeks or more, restarting when they return to Australia.

A family can use their 42 allowable absences for short term travel overseas.

Read more about [payments to families](#) on our website.

Tell us within 24 hours if a working with children check status changes

You must notify us when the status of a working with children check (WWCC) changes for any of the following people:

- Family Day Care educators
- In Home Care educators
- persons with management or control (PMCs) and
- persons responsible at the service who are required to have a WWCC.

A change in status includes if a check is:

- renewed



- extended
- suspended
- revoked
- lapsed or expired.

You must report the change via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software within 24 hours of becoming aware.

Learn more about [how to manage your WWCC](#) on our website.

New Geccko course: First Nations Cultural Awareness

Our new First Nations Cultural Awareness course is designed for all staff working in ECEC, including administrators, educators and support staff.

This course will help the ECEC sector better understand issues impacting First Nations families. Understanding these issues will help create a safe, welcoming and respectful environment.

This course will provide insights into:

- the impact of colonisation on First Nations people
- the experiences of First Nations people in ECEC settings
- practical steps you can take to support First Nations children, families, staff and communities.

Improve your cultural competency and share with your colleagues today.

Find out more and access this free course on [Geccko](#).

Workforce support

Professional development survey coming soon

We want to hear about your experience with our professional development opportunities.

We've engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a survey about our [professional development opportunities](#). This includes the:

- professional development subsidy
- paid practicum subsidy
- practicum exchange network
- practicum exchange living allowance.

The survey will open on Monday. If your service has accessed any of these opportunities, we encourage you to take part.

Please keep an eye out for an email from ORIMA with the survey link next week. We will also share a link in next week's newsletter.

The survey is voluntary. It is an opportunity to let us know how we can better support you in the future.



Apply for the practicum exchange living allowance

Don't forget – applications for the practicum exchange living allowance are open.

The practicum exchange network is a dedicated website connecting ECEC services and educators in training.

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area other than their home location.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

Apply for the professional development subsidy

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training. It covers 1 day of training per staff member.

We pay the subsidy to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from this subsidy, please talk to your provider about applying.

Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development subsidy](#).

News for families

Your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) may change if you have a child turning 6 this year

When your eldest child turns 6, the CCS rate you get may be different, depending on how many children you have and their ages.

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



Queensland floods: 14 new LGAs added and CCS period of emergency extended

We've added 14 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding. We have also extended the period of emergency.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 4 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Barcaldine Regional Council**
- **Shire of Boulia**
- **Cloncurry Shire Council**
- **Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Longreach Regional Council**
- **Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council**
- **Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Richmond Shire Council**
- **Winton Shire Council**
- **Blackall-Tambo Regional Council**
- **Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **McKinlay Shire Council**
- **Diamantina Shire Council**
- **Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Carpentaria Shire Council**
- **Croydon Shire Council**
- **Flinders Shire Council**
- **Charters Towers Regional Council**
- **Cook Shire Council**
- **Douglas Shire Council**
- **Etheridge Shire Council**
- **Tablelands Regional Council**
- **Whitsunday Regional Council**
- **Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Burdekin Shire Council**
- **Cairns Regional Council**
- **Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island**



- Townsville City Council
- Hinchinbrook Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency>.

For action

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

Western Australia cyclone: new LGA added to CCS period of emergency

We've added an extra local government area (LGA) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Western Australia due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Zelia.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 13 February 2025 to 20 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Shire of East Pilbara**
- City of Karratha
- Town of Port Hedland.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency WA](#).



For action

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



From the department

3-day guarantee – legislation passed

On 11 December 2024, the Australian Government announced changes to how subsidised hours are calculated for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

This change is part of the government's pathway toward a [universal early education and care system](#).

Legislation to enact this measure passed Parliament on 13 February 2025.

From 5 January 2026, families can get at least 72 subsidised hours of care each fortnight for each child. This is regardless of how much work, training, study or volunteering they do.

The department will now work with Services Australia to ensure child care providers and families are ready for the change in January next year.

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

Need help with your workplace instrument?

You can now get help to develop a workplace instrument that meets the requirements of the worker retention payment.

The following organisations can provide workplace instrument support:

- Ai Group
- Australian Childcare Alliance
- Community Early Learning Australia
- National Outside School Hours Services Alliance
- United Workers Union.

These organisations can help you with:

- single enterprise agreements
- variation to existing enterprise agreements
- individual flexibility arrangements
- ECEC Multi-Employer Agreement.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements.

We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

[Search the directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.



CCS periods of emergency declared

CCS periods of emergency are in place in parts of Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia due to the impact of fires, flooding, storms and cyclones.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Sector spotlight

What Closing the Gap report means for early childhood

On 10 February 2025, the Australian Government released the Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan.

The report:

- assesses the Commonwealth's progress against Closing the Gap targets and priority reforms over the last year
- outlines the Commonwealth's priorities to support Closing the Gap targets and priority reforms over the next year
- spotlights outstanding programs, services and initiatives.

Closing the Gap outcomes 3 and 4 focus on the early years. They aim to ensure:

- children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- children thrive in their early years.

The report highlights key achievements and investments to improve progress in these areas, including:

- continuation of the [Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership](#)
- expansion of [Connected Beginnings](#) to 50 sites across the country
- finalising the [Early Years Strategy](#) and developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- establishment of new First Nations-led ECEC services through the [Community Child Care Fund restricted expansion grant](#)
- changes to the CCS [activity test for families with First Nations children](#)
- announcement of a [building early education fund](#)
- core funding to support First Nations peaks, NATSIEC and SNAICC, to partner with government on matters affecting First Nations children in the early years.

Read the [Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan](#).



Spotlight on Connected Beginnings

This year's report puts a spotlight on the [Connected Beginnings program in Ceduna](#).

Connected Beginnings is an Australian Government grants program that helps Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life.

Connected Beginnings started in 2017 in Ceduna, South Australia. Since then, the program has laid the foundations for community-led systems change in Ceduna, Scotdesco and surrounding homelands. It also works with families of the Yalata and Oak Valley (Maralinga) communities who have connections with Ceduna and Koonibba.

"Our focus and our purpose of Connected Beginnings is engaging with our families. It's making sure that our families are safe, that their voices are listened to, and that when we're making decisions on programs centred around those families, that they are at the heart and soul of what we do. I want our kids to be treated fairly and to grow up safe and strong, connected to culture" – Connected Beginnings Project Officer, Ceduna.

There are now [50 Connected Beginnings](#) sites across Australia supporting about 24,800 children.

Facts from FAL

Have you made any changes to your business this year?

Under Family Assistance Law, you must notify us about changes to your business, including changes to fees, vacancies, closures and contact details.

You must notify us of these changes to maintain your CCS approval.

Find out more about [how to notify us about changes](#), including:

- when you must notify us
- who can notify us, and
- how to notify us, including links to helpful task cards.

Understanding shared care enrolments

Families must tell both you and Services Australia when their relationship changes.

If a child's parents are separated and both parents share responsibility for child care fees:

- both parents must make their own CCS claim
- you must establish separate care arrangements and enrolment notices for each parent.

Separate care arrangements are required even if you previously had a care arrangement in place before the separation.

Read more about [how to enrol children](#) on our website.



Workforce support

Discounted care for staff

Did you know you can offer a discounted fee to some staff whose children attend your service?

You can offer discounts to employees who:

- are employed, contracted or engaged as an educator, early childhood teacher or cook
- work at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service, and
- have a child enrolled at a service where they work or that you own.

It's up to you how much you want to discount. The employee must still pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

The discount won't affect the employee's CCS entitlement.

Learn more about the [discounted care for early childhood workforce](#).

Apply for the paid practicum subsidy

The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay this subsidy to providers, so you can give your staff paid leave while they complete practicums.

Practicums help teachers and educators in training gain practical, work-place experience in an early childhood educational setting. They are mandatory for most ECEC qualifications.

Providers must apply for the subsidy on behalf of staff. If you have staff who need to complete a practicum, we encourage you to apply.

If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Applications will close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [paid practicum subsidy](#).

News for families

You'll need your child's Customer Reference Number (CRN) to enrol them in child care.

If you're using child care, before or after school care or holiday care, you'll need to give the service your child's CRN.

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

Confirming your child's enrolment details for child care

To get Child Care Subsidy (CCS), you need to confirm your child's enrolment details.

Read more on the Services Australia website.



NSW storms: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Hilltops Council local government area (LGA) in New South Wales following storm activity.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 10 February 2025 to 12 February 2025.

To access the emergency provisions below your **person with management or control** must contact the department as follows:

- email CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au
- use the subject line "Claim for NSW storms CCS period of emergency"
- include in the body of the email for each affected service:
 - service name
 - service ID
 - service address
 - estimated number of impacted families
 - expected period of closure
 - reason for closure
 - note whether the service was directed to close
- attach any of the following as evidence for each affected service:
 - photos of damage caused by the storm
 - communications from state emergency services agencies
 - other information you consider helpful.

We will review your request for emergency support. We will respond via email to advise if your request has been approved.

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

Support during an emergency

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

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



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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



Western Australia cyclone: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Western Australia due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Zelia.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 13 February 2025 to 20 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- City of Karratha
- Town of Port Hedland

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency WA](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency WA](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Queensland floods: 3 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added 3 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 25 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Carpentaria Shire Council**
- **Croydon Shire Council**
- **Flinders Shire Council**
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council
- Hinchinbrook Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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



Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency>.

For action

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



From the department

Worker retention payment update

More support for worker retention payment applicants

We are funding organisations to help providers engage with the worker retention payment.

You will soon be able to access free support to engage with, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

The organisations we're funding to provide this support are:

- Community Early Learning Australia
- Australian Childcare Alliance
- National Outside School Hours Services Alliance
- AI Group
- SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children
- Independent Education Union
- United Workers Union
- Australian Services Union.

The organisations were selected based on their:

- knowledge of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector, and
- understanding of the worker retention payment.

We will provide a summary of services provided by each organisation and contact details soon.

Find out more about the [worker retention payment](#).

Passing funding on to labour hire workers

The government intends for all workers covered by the awards, or undertaking duties covered by the awards, get a wage increase. This includes workers engaged through a labour hire agency.

The worker retention payment is paid to eligible Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services. Services should work with their labour hire agency to:

- determine how funding will be passed on to workers hired through these agencies
 - update their contractual arrangements.

Any funding provided by a service to a labour hire agency must be passed on to workers as higher wages. Funding cannot be used to pay for the agency's fees.

Services should request evidence showing that funding has been passed on to workers. This evidence could be part of the contract terms or a formal declaration from the agency.



Providers must show that funding was used in line with these conditions in their annual reporting.

Read more about [who the payment covers](#).

Contacting our helpdesk

The CCS Provider Helpdesk is here to help you.

When you contact the helpdesk, you can expect our staff to provide a respectful service. We ask that you treat our staff respectfully in return. The helpdesk will not tolerate abusive, threatening or violent behaviour.

We understand many providers are awaiting the outcome of their worker retention payment application.

While helpdesk staff can provide advice about the worker retention payment, they do not have access to individual applications.

After submitting your application and receiving a confirmation email, no further action is required from you. If we need more information, we will contact you.

We are working to assess applications as quickly as possible and appreciate your patience.

CCS periods of emergency declared

CCS periods of emergency are in place in parts of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales due to the impact of fires, flooding and storms.

Visit our website to see:

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

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

Sector spotlight

Services continue to meet National Quality Standard

For the second quarter in a row, 91% of education and care services are rated Meeting NQS or above.

The NQF Snapshot is a national report on children's education and care services operating under the NQF. It provides information on the sector and the quality ratings of services against the NQS.

As at 1 January 2025, 17,842 NQF approved children's education and care services were operating across Australia.

The number of:

- services with a quality rating increased by 3% from Q4 2023
- approved services increased 2% from Q4 2023.

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

Be You events for early learning

Join Be You for new early learning events to make positive change in your learning community in 2025.



Be You in Practice is a 30-minute online event that will showcase a new topic every month. Each session will explore a theme and immerse you in practical examples through engaging case studies and scenarios.

The first Be You In Practice event will focus on **routines and rituals to support transitions**. It will take place at 3.30 pm AEDT on 19 February 2025.

Be You Fundamentals are 3 rotating events that cover topics fundamental to children's and educators' wellbeing. These events are an opportunity to discover how other learning communities are making meaningful changes in their mental health and wellbeing practices for children, educators, and the whole community.

The first Be You Fundamentals event will focus on **applying a wellbeing lens to your quality improvement plan**. It will take place at 12 pm AEDT on 3 March 2025.

Find out more and register for [Be You early learning events](#).

Be You is the national mental health and wellbeing initiative for ECEC services and schools.

Facts from FAL

Changing session reports from previous financial years

After a financial year ends, the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) closes for that year.

In limited circumstances, you may need to:

- submit a late session report
- vary or withdraw session reports.

If you need to submit, update or withdraw a session report from a previous financial year, you must apply to the department's CCS Provider Helpdesk.

You need to provide a separate application per family.

If you are applying to amend session reports for multiple children or weeks, you must provide the information in a spreadsheet. We cannot accept your application until you provide all information required.

Find more information about [changing session reports from previous financial years](#) on our website.

Our compliance approach

Our compliance approach recognises that many providers and services willingly comply with their obligations.

To support compliance, we:

- provide information, education and resources to help you understand and comply with your obligations
 - engage with stakeholders and the sector to support those who want to do the right thing
 - regularly check you are complying with your obligations and take compliance action when you're not
 - investigate tip-offs and reports of non-compliance.

We also work with other agencies to keep the system fair. This includes sharing intelligence and information, exchanging data, and engaging in joint taskforces and programs.



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

Workforce support

Join the practicum exchange network

Has your service joined the practicum exchange network?

The practicum exchange network is a dedicated website connecting ECEC services and educators in training.

On the network you can:

- search for services and educators with availability in your area
- connect with each other and arrange practicums.

Registration is easy. Simply enter your details to create a user profile and start connecting.

Go to [prac.education.gov.au](#).

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

News for families

It's time to update your family and child care details

Make sure your details are up to date so you get the right amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Family Tax Benefit (FTB).

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

Check the progress of your families claim online

You can check the progress of your Family Tax Benefit (FTB) or Child Care Subsidy (CCS) claim online.

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



NSW storms: 6 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added 6 extra local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of storm activity.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 15 January 2025 to 17 January 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Central Coast Council
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Ku-ring-gai Council
- City of Newcastle
- Wagga Wagga City Council
- Wingecarribee Shire Council
- City of Maitland
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Mid-Coast Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Cessnock Shire Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Snowy Valleys Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council.

To access the emergency provisions below your **person with management or control** must contact the department as follows:

- email CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au
- use the subject line "Claim for NSW storms CCS period of emergency"
- include in the body of the email for each affected service:
 - service name
 - service ID
 - service address
 - estimated number of impacted families



- expected period of closure
- reason for closure
- note whether the service was directed to close
- attach any of the following as evidence for each affected service:
 - photos of damage caused by the storm
 - communications from state emergency services agencies
 - other information you consider helpful.

We will review your request for emergency support. We will respond via email to advise if your request has been approved.

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Victorian fires: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Victoria where some services have been directed to close due to the impact of fires.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 27 January 2025 to 10 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Hindmarsh Shire Council
- Rural City of Horsham
- West Wimmera Shire
- Ararat Rural City
- Macedon Ranges Shire
- Northern Grampians Shire
- Southern Grampians Shire.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

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



- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [VicEmergency](#).

For action

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

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



Queensland floods: 7 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added 7 extra local government areas (LGA) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 25 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Charters Towers Regional Council**
- **Cook Shire Council**
- **Douglas Shire Council**
- **Etheridge Shire Council**
- **Tablelands Regional Council**
- **Whitsunday Regional Council**
- **Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.**
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council
- Hinchinbrook Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support

- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
 - families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency>.

For action

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



Queensland floods: new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added two extra local government areas (LGA) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 11 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council
- **Hinchinbrook Council**
- **Cassowary Coast Regional Council.**

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

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



- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at gld.gov.au/emergency.

For action

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

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



From the department

3-day guarantee legislation introduced

Today, the Australian Government introduced legislation to parliament to give children access to 3 days a week of subsidised early childhood education and care.

It's called the 3-day guarantee.

Should legislation pass, families can get at least 72 subsidised hours of care each fortnight for each child. This is regardless of how much work, training, study or volunteering they do.

Families caring for First Nations children will get 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight for each child.

This proposed change is part of the government's pathway toward a [universal early education and care system](#).

Read more about the [proposed changes](#).

How to request a worker retention payment funding review

The funding review process allows us to support unique providers for whom the standard payment calculation method is not appropriate.

A provider must be approved for the worker retention payment and smooth funding across services **before** requesting a funding review.

The provider must operate services that:

- have a unique staffing profile, or
- have stand-alone jurisdiction-funded preschool rooms, or
- are First Nations, remote/ or very remote, or
- get the Community Child Care Fund and have a unique operating model, or
- cannot be provided consistent and smoothed funding by the provider across a financial year.

If you meet the above criteria, contact ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au to request a funding review.

Read more about [requesting a funding review](#) on our website.

Give feedback on disability standards

We're seeking feedback on proposed changes to include early childhood education and care (ECEC) in the Disability Standards for Education (the Standards).

The Standards explain what you must do to support students with disability.

In [2020 a review of the Standards](#) recommended including ECEC services. This will make it clearer and easier for you to understand what your service must do to support children with disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.



You can give feedback anonymously and you do not have to answer all the questions.

FAQs, documents that explain the changes, and the link to provide feedback are on the [consultation website](#).

CCS period of emergency declared

A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place for parts of New South Wales and Queensland due to the impact of storms and flooding.

Visit our website to read more about:

- [NSW storms: CCS period of emergency](#)
- [Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency](#).

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

Sector spotlight

Changes to fit and proper person requirements

From 1 April 2025, new CCS provider approval applicants will need to provide a statement of tax record (STR).

The provider must supply the STR. Applicants will need to:

- request and obtain the required STR for their organisation from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- provide the STR as part of their application for CCS approval.

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

Providers will be able to request an STR from the ATO:

- by using [ATO online services](#)
- through their registered tax professional.

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

Facts from FAL

Inducements and advertising your service

An inducement is an incentive offered by a provider or a third party to secure a child's enrolment at a service.

Inducements that are financial or not directly associated with the quality or provision of education or care services are not allowed. This includes cash, vouchers, electronics devices, gifts or gift cards.

You can:

- offer discounted or free care
- advertise your service and offer free site visits or trial periods



- issue marketing merchandise to the value of \$30 per complying written arrangement
- include extra-curricular activities as part of a session fee
- advertise your social impact through activities like donations to a charity
- provide transport to or from your service, if this is part of your normal business practice.

Fee discounts must be reported correctly if CCS is claimed.

Read about [inducements and advertising at your service](#) on our website.

How to avoid an overpayment

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

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

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

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

Learn more about [how to manage overpayments](#) on our website.

Need help administering CCS?

Our website has everything you need to know about child care subsidy, including [how-to guides](#) for administering CCS.

If you need specific help to administer CCS, our CCS Provider Helpdesk is the place to go.

The helpdesk provides frontline support for child care providers and services seeking answers. The helpdesk can answer your questions about:

- CCS and ACCS payments
- enrolments
- session reports
- gap fees
- absences.

You can email the helpdesk on CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au anytime. We will respond during business hours.

If your query relates to CCS, always include your CCS Provider/Service ID in your email.

Workforce support

Apply for a professional development subsidy

Applications for our professional development subsidies are open.

The subsidies aim to strengthen the skills and professional experience of your workforce.

We pay the subsidies to providers to pass on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.



The subsidies provide a flat daily or weekly rate depending on the activity. This may not cover all costs. Providers are responsible for any remaining costs, including associated on-costs.

Following high demand for the professional development subsidy in the last round, we will prioritise applications for:

- educators in regional and remote areas
- First Nations educators.

Remaining applications will be funded in the order they are received until funding is exhausted.

Applications close on 14 March.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

News for families

Getting help with child care fees for before and after school care

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can help with the cost of child care, before and after school care and holiday care.

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



NSW storms: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW following storm activity.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 15 January 2025 to 17 January 2025 in the following local government areas:

- City of Maitland
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Mid-Coast Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Cessnock City Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Snowy Valleys Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council

To access the emergency provisions below your **person with management or control** must contact the department as follows:

- email CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au
- use the subject line "Claim for NSW storms CCS period of emergency"
- include in the body of the email for each affected service:
 - service name
 - service ID
 - service address
 - estimated number of impacted families
 - expected period of closure
 - reason for closure
 - note whether the service was directed to close
- attach any of the following as evidence for each affected service:
 - photos of damage caused by the storm
 - communications from state emergency services agencies
 - other information you consider helpful.



We will review your request for emergency support. We will respond via email to advise if your request has been approved.

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

For action

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



Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 11 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council.

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

Support during the emergency

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

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

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

Support after the emergency

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

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

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

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



- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at qld.gov.au/emergency.

For action

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

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



From the department

Worker retention payment funding review process

The funding review process allows us to support unique providers for whom the standard worker retention payment calculation method is not appropriate.

The government has committed to provide all participating providers with funding to cover:

- a 10% wage increase for all eligible workers in the first year
- an additional 5% wage increase for all eligible workers in the second year
- a minimum of an additional 20% funding for eligible on-costs.

For most providers, a standard payment calculation will cover these costs. However, there may be a small number of services who provide a unique service offering outside the scope of the standard payment calculation.

This includes providers who operate services that:

- have a unique staffing profile, or
- have stand-alone jurisdiction-funded preschool rooms, or
- are First Nations, remote/ or very remote, or
- get the Community Child Care Fund and have a unique operating model, or
- cannot be provided consistent and smoothed funding by the provider across a financial year.

Providers of these services can request a funding review. **Before** requesting a review, you must first be approved for the worker retention payment.

You will need to complete an application to receive a funding review. If found eligible:

- we will vary your grant agreement
- some or all of your services will move to an alternative funding review stream
- payments will be made quarterly based on employee data
- you will have additional reporting requirements.

Read more about the [funding review process](#) on our website.

Ensuring quality and safety in early childhood education and care

We're ensuring quality and safety in services that don't operate under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

For most early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, the NQF provides a national approach to ensuring quality standards are met.

A small number of services are out of scope of the NQF. This includes some Community Child Care Fund restricted (CCCFR) services. Such services operate under the *Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017*.



This year we're starting a regulatory project to provide additional support to these services. This will enable them to meet the quality and safety requirements in the Minister's Rules.

We will work collaboratively with these services to ensure quality and safety.

Our regulatory approach:

- will align with the key objectives of the NQF
- will acknowledge the unique contexts these services operate in
- aims to ensure all children have access to high quality and safe early learning environments.

The project builds on several existing projects including:

- [ACECQA Quality and Safety Project](#)
- [Northern Territory Regulatory Project](#)
- [South Australia Regulatory Project](#).

We have contacted identified services directly with more information. If you have questions about the project, contact ECYRegulatoryProject@education.gov.au.

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

Facts from FAL

Reminder that fee reporting obligations were due 14 January

Changes made in September 2024 mean that you must notify us of fees at least twice a year to ensure they are correctly updated or remain accurate.

You need to notify us of your fees 14 days after the end of the:

- financial year – due 14 July
- calendar year – due 14 January.

This also includes reporting no change to fees.

To report no change, update the date of event on the fees and inclusions screen via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

This reporting obligation is in addition to the current notification requirements to report the fees within 14 days of:

- receiving CCS approval
- starting the CCS approved service
- changing your fees.

This change was part of the government's commitment to improving the transparency of child care fees. It will help families make informed financial decisions about ECEC.

Read more about [notifications and reporting](#) on our website.



Claiming CCS when your service is closed

Did you know that you cannot claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when your service is closed, except:

- on a public holiday by law
- during a CCS period of emergency.

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

What happens if you get an infringement notice?

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

An infringement is a fine and can be expensive. Some infringement notices are more than \$15,000.

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

Our website has a range of resources to help you avoid an infringement notice, including:

- a free online learning module on [Geccko](#), our online learning platform
- information about [how to administer CCS](#)
- a [comprehensive table of reporting obligations, tasks and timeframes](#)
- a [series of short videos](#) covering common compliance issues
- [handbooks, guides and task cards](#) on key programs.

Reporting absences

You can report an absence in your session reports if:

- the child was enrolled in a session of care but did not attend, and
- the family has been charged a gap fee for that session of care.

You cannot report absences when your service is closed, except on a public holiday or during a [period of emergency](#).

During a period of emergency, the closure must be as a direct result of the emergency.

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

Workforce support

Support for educators to complete practicums

Are your educators using the practicum exchange network? They may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum exchange.

The [practicum exchange network](#) is a dedicated website connecting ECEC services and educators in training.

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living and travel allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area.



Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

Share with families

Families facing tough times may get more child care support

If you are facing difficult or challenging circumstances, you can sometimes get free child care. This is called Additional Child Care Subsidy, or ACCS. It usually covers all fees.

There are 4 types of ACCS:

Child wellbeing

The child wellbeing subsidy is for families who need practical help to support their child's safety and wellbeing. Your child care service applies for this on behalf of families. Families cannot apply.

Grandparent

The grandparent subsidy is for grandparents on income support who are the primary carer of their grandchild.

Temporary financial hardship

The temporary financial hardship subsidy is for families experiencing temporary, significant financial stress.

Transition to work

The transition to work subsidy is for parents or carers transitioning to work from income support.

Except for ACCS child wellbeing, you apply on the [Services Australia website](#) or through your myGov account.

Families can find more details at [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#).



From the department

We've improved our website

We've made changes to our website based on your feedback.

Last year we asked you what you thought of our website. You provided valuable feedback, including the need for more streamlined navigation.

You can still find all the information you need at education.gov.au/early-childhood. We've improved the structure and layout of the site to help you find what you're looking for.

We've established a new section for providers which contains:

- how-to guides for administering the Child Care Subsidy
- information about your legal obligations
- our approach to compliance and enforcement
- extra support available during difficult or challenging times
- what we're doing to support your workforce.

As part of the updates, some URLs have changed. We recommend updating your bookmarks to ensure you can easily access our content.

Get the latest on the worker retention payment

Visit our website for the latest information about the [worker retention payment](#).

On our website, you'll find:

- a summary of the grant guidelines
- information about workplace instruments, awards and supported bargaining
- the minimum rates you must pass on to eligible workers
- an application guide, and more.

We are receiving a high volume of incomplete or inaccurate applications. Applications must be complete and accurate before we can start our assessment.

Please consult our [application guide](#) and ensure you have checked off all the required details before submitting.



Celebrating 50 Connected Beginnings sites



Last week the Australian Government launched the 50th Connected Beginnings site in Kununurra, Western Australia.

This is a major milestone for the grants program, which helps Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life.

In 2021, the Australian Government committed \$81.8 million to expand the program to 50 sites nationally by 2025.

Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP announced \$2.4 million for Binarii-binyja yarrawoo Aboriginal Corporation Limited to deliver the 50th site in Kununurra on Thursday.

The new site will support around 600 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in Kununurra.

Nationally, the program supports about 24,800 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children across all 50 sites. The program has the potential to support up to 20% of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged zero to 5.

Connected Beginnings is a community-owned and led initiative making a tangible difference in Closing the Gap in early childhood education. It provides steady, wrap-around support so children are safe, healthy and ready to thrive at school.

The program is jointly funded by us and the [Department of Health and Aged Care](#). It's delivered in partnership with [SNAICC – National Voice for our Children](#) and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

Learn more about [Connected Beginnings](#) and [explore all 50 sites](#).

CCS helpdesk closed next Monday

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Provider Helpdesk will be closed for the public holiday on Monday 27 January.

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEDT on Tuesday 28 January.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime at CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

Reminder for CCCF grant recipients

A reminder that grants under round 4 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) disadvantaged and vulnerable communities grant are transitioning to the [Community Grants Hub](#).

If you have a capital support grant, it will transition from tomorrow.

If you have both a capital support and sustainability support grant, both will transition from tomorrow.

If you only have a sustainability support grant, it will transition from 31 March 2025.

You don't need to do anything. The Community Grants Hub will contact you once your grant has been transferred.

Change to start date of direct gap fee collection

Last year, the government announced that Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) providers must collect the gap fee direct from families.

The start date for this measure has moved to 1 January 2026. This change is based on feedback from the sector. It gives providers time to make necessary administrative changes.

We have partnered with Family Day Care Australia and the NSW Family Day Care Association to support providers to transition.

Family Day Care Australia will support FDC providers. NSW Family Day Care Association will support IHC providers. They will be reaching out to providers shortly.

An [overview of the proposed changes](#) can be found on our website.

This measure is subject to the passage of legislation.

Sector spotlight

Issues with RA number in PRODA

A small number of providers are experiencing an IT error where their RA number is removed from their records.

If you're affected:

- your service status will show as 'not approved'
- you will not be able to interact with your services in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS).

This does not mean that your CCS approval has been removed.

To fix the problem, a person with management or control should email CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au. Include screenshots from PRODA showing:

- your PRODA RA number and your ABN
- personnel details for your organisation showing the person listed as 'Director'.

We will work with Services Australia to restore access. This usually takes 1–2 business days.

We are also working with Services Australia to permanently fix the issue.



Celebrating one year of Geccko



Geccko is our free online learning platform for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. It has resources to help you understand your Family Assistance Law (FAL) obligations.

Geccko was launched in December 2023 and has since become a go-to resource for providers. Geccko has:

- more than 6,000 user registrations
- more than 12,500 course completions.

What we're hearing from users:

"These courses would be very beneficial to new staff."

"The learning courses are very user-friendly and easy to complete, and specifically, the knowledge tests are very user friendly and easy too."

Want to improve your understanding of FAL and check you're administering CCS correctly? Register to use Geccko.

You can:

- login using your tablet, laptop, or mobile phone
- access a range of self-paced courses about FAL
- download course certificates upon completion.

Geccko currently offers 11 free courses. New courses are added regularly. Two key courses coming this year include a First Nations Cultural Awareness course and a comprehensive Family Day Care course.

If there is a specific topic that you want us to explore, please email us at gecko@education.gov.au.

[Find out more and register for Geccko.](#)

Get our updates on social media

Did you know we run a Facebook group for CCS approved providers and services?

Our group is a place to get authorised and fact-checked information about:

- CCS



- FAL
- other Australian Government-led ECEC policies and programs.

We welcome general conversation about these topics in our group. Where you need specific help or advice, we encourage you to contact the CCS Provider Helpdesk.

If you haven't already, join more than 10,000 members in [our Facebook group](#).

Facts from FAL

The enrolment process in 4 steps

As we enter a new year, it's a good time to refresh your understanding of the enrolment process.

All children who attend approved care must be enrolled. This is a requirement under FAL.

Enrolling children correctly means families can get CCS payments.

Follow these steps.

Step 1

Families lodge a CCS claim using their Centrelink online account. They should do this before their child starts at your service.

Step 2

You and the family agree on care arrangements for the child. Families must agree to the care arrangements in writing.

Step 3

Submit an enrolment notice in the CCSS for the care arrangement.

Step 4

The family will be prompted to confirm the enrolment via their Centrelink online account. CCS payments will not start until the enrolment is confirmed.

Read more details about the [enrolment process](#) on our website.

Salary sacrificing early childhood education and care fees

Do you have families who pay through salary sacrifice? Make sure you're reporting their fees correctly to avoid compliance action.

Salary sacrificing is considered a third-party payment. There are rules you must follow when a third party contributes to a family's fees.

Generally, when a third party helps a family pay its fees, you must deduct the contribution from the total session fee.

The family's CCS rate will then be applied to the reduced session fee. This is because families are only entitled to CCS in relation to the amount they have to pay after any third-party payments.

The family must still pay a gap fee.



Check out the examples on our website to help you understand [how to report different types of third-party payments](#).

Workforce support

Apply for professional development subsidies



Applications are open for our professional development and paid practicum subsidies.

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training.

The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Following high demand for the professional development subsidy in the last round, we will prioritise applications for:

- educators in regional and remote areas
- First Nations educators.

Remaining applications will be funded in the order they are received until funding is exhausted.

Applications will close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Share with families

Know where to go for help when you have an issue?

Start by having a conversation with your child care service or provider if you have a complaint or dispute relating to Child Care Subsidy (CCS) including:

- enrolments, payments, debts or balancing
- safety or quality.

If they cannot resolve the issue, you have a range of options.

Services Australia

Contact Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) if you have a complaint or concern about:

- enrolments
- payments
- debts
- CCS payment balancing.

If your child care service or Services Australia are unable to resolve the issue, submit our [online contact form](#).

Child safety concerns

If you have concerns about the quality or safety of a child care service or provider, contact your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



From the department

Worker retention payment update

New workplace instrument available

On 10 December 2024, the Fair Work Commission approved the [Early Childhood Education and Care Multi-Employer Enterprise Agreement](#).

The agreement is compliant with the worker retention payment conditions. This means that providers covered by the agreement will meet the workplace instrument requirement.

Providers can apply to join the agreement. Find out how on the [Fair Work Commission website](#).

Compliant workplace instruments

You must engage workers through a workplace instrument that meets grant conditions.

The workplace instrument must:

- include an obligation to pay workers at least 10% above current award rates
- provide for an additional 5% above applicable award rates from 1 December 2025
- apply until at least 30 November 2026.

A workplace instrument will not be compliant if it excludes the above amounts from calculations of:

- penalties
- loadings
- termination payments
- payments while on leave
- superannuation.

Minimum rates updated

We have updated the [worker retention payment minimum rates](#) to reflect the *Children's Services Award 2010* rate increase for level 1.1 workers from 1 January 2025.

Get help with your application

We are receiving a high volume of incomplete or inaccurate applications. Applications must be complete and accurate before we can start our assessment.

Before you submit your application, please consult our [application guide](#) and ensure you have checked off all the required details.

The application guide shows you:

- how to find your CRNs, ABN and ACNs



- how to find your correct provider and service names
- guidance on financial and staffing information.

Payments start this month

Regular payments will start to eligible providers this month.

We will send payments to the same bank account as your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

Please ensure your bank account details are up to date via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Backdating payments

We understand meeting certain conditions, like having a workplace instrument, may take time. We will backdate payments for providers who:

- submit a complete application by 30 June 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

We will backdate payments to either:

- 2 December 2024: for providers who have a compliant workplace instrument that covers the full grant period, even if the instrument was adopted or formed after 2 December 2024
- the date from which the workplace instrument applies: for providers who have a compliant workplace instrument that starts after 2 December 2024.

Get the latest on our website

We have resources to help you navigate the process, including:

- read [details about the payment](#)
- see the [minimum rates you must pass on to eligible workers](#)
- learn about the [types of workplace instruments you may use](#)
- consult our [application guide for help applying](#).

Connected Beginnings is expanding in the ACT

The Australian Government is expanding the Connected Beginnings program in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Connected Beginnings is a grants program that helps Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life.

It's for children from birth to school age and pregnant women. Through it, children can get steady, wrap-around support. This helps them meet the learning and development milestones needed for a smooth start to school.

The new site at Winnunga Nimmityjah Health and Community Services will support up to 1000 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children across the ACT.

The site joins 48 other locations across the country supporting about 24,200 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

The new site is part of an \$81.8 million investment from the Australian Government to expand the program to 50 sites nationally.

Once all 50 sites are established, the program has the potential to support up to 20% of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged zero to 5.

Learn more about [Connected Beginnings](#).

Update for CCCF grant recipients

Grants made under round 4 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) disadvantaged and vulnerable communities grant will soon transition to the [Community Grants Hub](#).

The transition will occur in 2 phases:

- if you only have a 'capital support' grant, this will transition from 23 January 2025
- if you have both a 'capital support' and 'sustainability support' grant, these will both transition from 23 January 2025
- if you only have a 'sustainability support' grant, this will transition from 31 March 2025.

You don't need to do anything. The Community Grants Hub will contact you once your grant has been transferred.

After this, all communication about your grant will be through the Community Grants Hub. This includes:

- questions about your grant
- grant reporting
- payment information
- acquittals.

We will continue to manage grants until the transfer date.

Facts from FAL

Getting ready for a new school year

Here are some important reminders about the CCS as we approach the start of another school year.

Families should ensure their child's expected primary school start date is up to date with Services Australia. Services Australia uses this information to calculate a family's CCS rate.

Children who have finished primary school can continue to attend care and get CCS over the school holidays if:

- they are under 13
- they have not yet started attending high school.

You must end a child's enrolment if their family advises they're ending care. You may need to do this for children who will leave your service to start school. You can end enrolments in the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

We generally don't pay CCS for any absences after a child's last physical attendance at your service. Read more about [absences at the start or end of an enrolment on our website](#).



How can you help families use EFT?

Most families get salaries or benefits electronically, making it easy for them to pay the gap fee using electronic funds transfer (EFT).

Families can pay the gap fee by payroll deduction as long as:

- the payment is made using EFT
- the provider can identify the electronic payment as being the gap fee for the family.

Learn more about how [you can help families use EFT](#).

Complete the **Electronic Payment of Gap Fees** course in [Geccko](#) to learn more.

Submitting session reports

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

As a CCS-approved provider, you must:

- submit session reports within 14 days after the end of the week in which the session of care was provided
- submit a session report for each child at your service, for each week a session of care is provided
- include at least one session of care a week, recorded as either an attendance or absence
- only include sessions of care for which you charge a family a fee for providing care to their child.

Submit session reports through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

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

Who must have a working with children check?

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

This usually includes:

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

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

Find out more about your [WWCC obligations](#) and where to apply on our website.



Workforce support

Apply for professional development subsidies



Applications are now open for round 2 of the 2024–25 professional development subsidies.

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training.

The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Following high demand for the professional development subsidy in the last round, we will prioritise applications for:

- educators in regional and remote areas
- First Nations educators.

Remaining applications will be funded in the order they are received until funding is exhausted.

Applications will close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

Practicum exchange living allowance applications open

Providers can now apply for a living allowance for educators who complete practicums in rural and remote areas.

The practicum exchange living allowance is for educators who:

- use the [practicum exchange network](#)
- arrange a practicum in a rural or remote area other than their home location between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 through the network
- have worked full-time, part-time or casually at a CCS-approved service for more than 40 hours in the last 3 months
- are an Australian citizen, permanent resident or hold a valid work visa.

The allowance will provide up to \$1,543.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks.

Applications are now open. Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

Share with families

Will you have more than one child in care this year?

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

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

- you get or will be eligible for CCS
- your family's combined income is under \$365,611
- your family has more than one CCS eligible child aged 5 or under.

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

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

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

