



Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

Child Care Provider Handbook

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The document must be attributed as the Child Care Provider Handbook.

Child Care Provider Handbook

Regarding Australian Government child care payments and funding

This is the first online version of the Child Care Provider Handbook. It has been published 29 May 2018 in advance of the commencement of the new Child Care Subsidy on 2 July 2018 to assist providers in their transition to the new child care package, and to allow time for feedback.

If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of the Handbook or the operation of this website, please email childcareproviderhandbook@education.gov.au.

A printable PDF version is provided for accessibility and providers who may not have reliable internet access. For easy access to direct links to external online resources, to ensure that you are using the latest version and to enable you to use the search engine and hyperlinks to find specific information, we recommend that you refer to the website version where possible.

Please note that some website links cannot be provided at the time of publication, but will be updated when available and before 2 July 2018.



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1. Introduction





1. Introduction

The Child Care Provider Handbook (the Handbook) is written for providers of early learning and child care.

It is a guide to the requirements and responsibilities of child care providers and services that are approved under Family Assistance Law.

Providers of early childhood and child care services should check the types of eligible child care services to determine whether they may be able to apply for approval.

Information for families

While the Handbook focuses on the role and responsibilities of providers, it also outlines the way families interact with the child care payments system and provides links to the resources available to guide families. The links to these resources for families are highlighted.

The Handbook includes sections on provider and service approvals, enrolling children, submitting reports, receiving payments and seeking additional subsidies and grants.

This Handbook will be updated regularly, with the most recent version appearing on the Department of Education and Training website. The version number and date are shown the Handbook landing page, and in every page within the Handbook website and the printable PDF version.

Take care when referring to printed copies of the Handbook, as they may be out of date.

For easy access to direct links to external online resources, to ensure that you are using the latest version, and to enable you to use the search engine and hyperlinks to find specific information, we recommend that you refer to the website where possible.

The Handbook is at www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook.

Key terms

Provider — an individual, business or organisation that delivers child care services.

Approved provider — a provider that holds approval to operate one or more child care services under the Family Assistance Law.

Service — the child care that is delivered by a provider in a particular site or setting. There are different types of child care services. One provider may deliver one or more services, which may include different service types and/or different service sites.

Child — the unique child who receives early learning and care. The child must meet certain requirements for their family to receive Child Care Subsidy (or Additional Child Care Subsidy).

Individual — the person who is responsible for the child's care and who (or whose partner) is liable to pay the child care fees. The individual is often the child's parent (or the parent's partner) but may be another adult with legal responsibility for the child. The individual must meet certain requirements to receive Child Care Subsidy (or Additional Child Care Subsidy).

Claimant — another term used to describe an individual in relation to their claim for Child Care Subsidy.

Third-party software — software developed and provided by commercial providers to interact with the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy System (information technology system), and to support other administrative and management activities for child care providers.

Department of Human Services / Centrelink — where the Handbook refers to interactions between families and the Department of Human Services, it refers to Centrelink, the name under which the Department delivers services to families. Where the Handbook refers to interactions between the Department of Human Services and providers, it refers to the Department of Human Services.

These and other important terms are defined in the glossary.

Important notice and disclaimer

All approved early childhood and child care providers must be familiar with and comply with the legislation and legislative instruments that form the Family Assistance Law.

Providers must also be familiar with and comply with the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations), unless they are exempt.

Provider's obligations to comply with the Family Assistance Law apply separately from their obligations to comply with the National Law and to meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework. Providers must ensure they are compliant with both. The Commonwealth only administers the Family Assistance Law. State and territory regulators administer the National Law.

This Handbook is provided as guidance only and is not the law. Providers and other users accept any risk involved in relying on this Handbook to their detriment, without having first had regard to the Family Assistance Law. The Family Assistance Law is set out in Commonwealth legislation and legislative instruments which could be amended before this Handbook can be updated. If there is a conflict or discrepancy between the material in this Handbook and the Family Assistance Law, the Family Assistance Law will always prevail. As such, providers and others who use this Handbook should refer to the Family Assistance Law for the laws that apply to child care payments and the approval of child care providers and services. Links are provided to the relevant laws, where possible, at the end of each section of the handbook.

Providers should also be familiar with the conditions of their approvals and any relevant terms and conditions in any contractual funding agreements they have entered into with the Commonwealth. If there is conflict between material contained in this Handbook and conditions of approval or terms in funding agreements, then the conditions and terms prevail.

Comments and suggestions

If you have any suggestions or ideas on how to improve this Handbook, please email childcareproviderhandbook@education.gov.au with the subject line 'Child Care Provider Handbook suggestions', explaining your feedback or suggestion and giving your contact details to follow up as needed.

Legislative framework

The key legislation of the Family Assistance Law includes:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* as amended by the *Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* as amended by the *Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*
- *Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*.

The following instruments are also relevant to users of this Handbook:

- [Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01464)
(<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01464>)
- [Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01463)
(<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01463>)
- [Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00255)
(<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00255>).

For a full list of legislative instruments that are part of the Family Assistance Law, see www.education.gov.au.

This legislation underpins the commencement of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy from 2 July 2018. This replaced Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate, Special Child Care Benefit, Grandparent Child Care Benefit, and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance.

Child care system responsibilities

Government responsibilities

The Australian Government provides financial assistance to families, mainly as subsidies, under the Family Assistance Law. This Handbook outlines this financial assistance as it relates to approved child care providers.

State and territory governments are responsible for the quality and safety of child care services. They administer the National Quality Framework and approve and regulate child care services under the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) and Regulations.

National Quality Framework

A regulatory authority in each state and territory has primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of child care providers and services in its jurisdiction. It performs this role under a national legislative framework known as the National Quality Framework that consists of the National Law and the National Regulations.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) — a national body established under the National Law — supports states and territories to deliver best practice regulation and ensure national consistency in improving quality outcomes for children.

Key aspects of the National Quality Framework include:

- specified educator-to-child ratios, so that each child receives the individual time and attention they need

- an approved learning framework to support each child's learning and development
- educator qualification requirements, so educators are better able to lead activities that inspire children and help them learn and develop
- an assessment and ratings system, so parents know the quality of early learning and child care on offer and can make informed choices.

To help providers and services to implement and navigate the National Quality Framework, a range of supporting guides and resources is available on the ACECQA website at www.acecqa.gov.au.

Provider responsibilities

Becoming an approved provider under Family Assistance Law means accepting the legal responsibilities associated with operating a child care service (or services) and passing fee reductions on to eligible parents (or guardians) if child care payments are paid to it by the Commonwealth for those parents' benefit. It is a provider's responsibility to understand and comply with its obligations under the law.

Providers have many obligations, including obligations to:

- comply with the Family Assistance Law
- comply with the National Law and National Regulations, and all applicable Commonwealth and state or territory laws relating to the operation of a child care service, unless exempt (see Services exempt from the National Law and Regulations)
- ensure the provider, any person with management or control of the provider, any person responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service, Family Day Care educators and In Home Care Educators (where applicable) are fit and proper persons to be involved in the administration of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy
- ensure that background checks are carried out for particular personnel — including criminal history and working with children checks where applicable
- notify the Department of Education and Training of changes relating to their service (referred to as 'Notifiable Events in the Family Assistance Law').


The Department of Education and Training helps providers to meet their obligations under Family Assistance Law, but ultimately it is the provider's responsibility to be aware of these obligations and comply with them.

Consequences for non-compliance

Where an approved provider fails to comply with one or more obligations, sanctions and/or penalties may be imposed. Possible sanctions include suspension or cancellation of provider or service approval, or conditions placed on the approval. A provider's approval can be immediately suspended in some circumstances.

Failure to comply with some of the provisions can attract civil penalties, result in an infringement notice being issued or, in serious cases, result in criminal prosecution for an offence.

In addition to the actions described above, the Department of Education and Training may publicise information relating to the imposition of a sanction or immediate suspension for non-compliance with obligations under Family Assistance Law. Details of the sanction or immediate suspension, and the provider and service they relate to, may be published, for example, on the Department of Education and Training's website.



For more information about the Department of Education and Training's approach to compliance, see the Child Care Payments Compliance Program web page at www.education.gov.au/compliance.

Child care support — the three main elements

Three main elements make up the Australian Government's child care support system:

1. Child Care Subsidy
2. Child Care Safety Net
3. Child Care Subsidy System.

The first two elements are forms of financial assistance, and the third is the system that supports the administration of this financial assistance. Each element is described in more detail in the following sections.

1. Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is the regular payment that assists most families with the costs of child care. Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to providers in most cases, to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. (It will reduce the fees that a family pays a child care provider for the care of their child).

Three main factors will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy. These are:

- Family income — the combined adjusted taxable income of parents/guardians
- Activity Test — the participation activity level of the parents/guardians
- Hourly rate caps — that apply to the type of child care service and age of the child.

Information for families

Centrelink Payment and Service Finder – to estimate what the Child Care Subsidy might be and assess eligibility for other support payments.

mychild.gov.au – for information about children's services, including early learning and child care services, costs and vacancies.

my.gov.au – to create and then access a Centrelink online account, to make Child Care Subsidy claims and view the status of claims.

2. Child Care Safety Net

The Child Care Safety Net provides targeted assistance to vulnerable and at-risk children and their families. It also supports child care services in disadvantaged communities to address barriers in accessing and participating in early learning and care.

The Safety Net has a number of components:

Additional Child Care Subsidy

This provides a higher level of subsidy to support:

- families who require practical help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
- grandparents on income support who are primary carers
- families experiencing temporary financial hardship
- parents transitioning from income support to work.

Community Child Care Fund

Under this fund, eligible child care providers are able to apply for supplementary funding through a grants program to:

- reduce the barriers in accessing child care, particularly for disadvantaged or vulnerable families and communities
- provide sustainability support for child care services experiencing viability issues
- provide capital support to increase the supply of child care places in areas of high unmet demand.

Inclusion Support Program

This program helps early learning and child care providers to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services — providing them with an opportunity to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers.

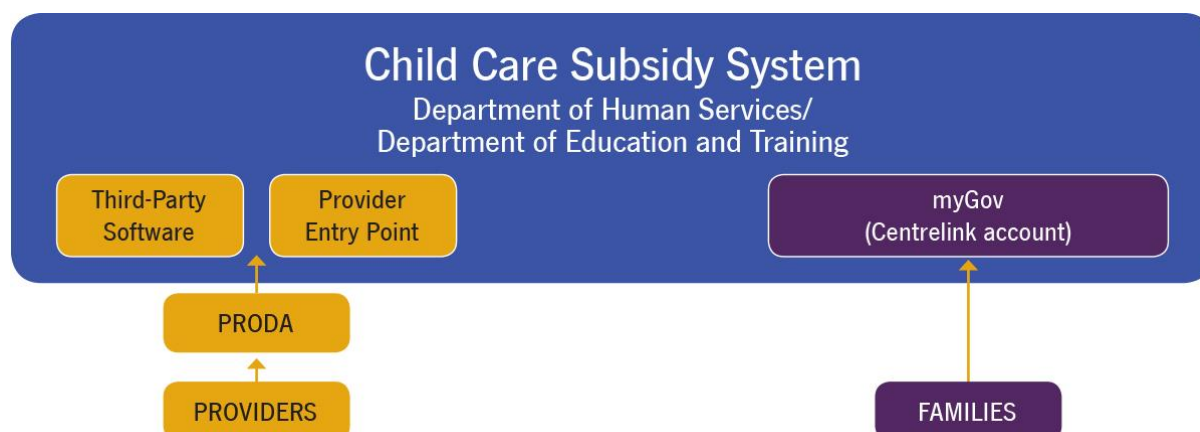
3. Child Care Subsidy System

Approved providers of child care services will interact with the Australian Government mainly through the Child Care Subsidy System — via either:

- software from a registered third-party provider, or
- The Provider Entry Point (the interface designed for providers to submit and receive data, notifications and reports).

The elements of the Child Care Subsidy System are set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Summary of access to the Child Care Subsidy System for child care providers (via PRODA) and families (via Centrelink)



The Child Care Subsidy System provides a simple and easy user interface for families and child care providers. It is designed to simplify, streamline and automate the administration of child care payments and programs, and to support compliance with the legislation.

A number of commercial software companies have developed software that interacts with the Child Care Subsidy System. While providers are not obliged to use registered third-party software, this may offer additional functionality beyond that built in to the Provider Entry Point, such as rostering and room management, invoicing, vacancy management, payroll management and advanced reporting and statements.

The Provider Entry Point enables providers to apply for approval under Family Assistance Law and directly access information such as amounts of subsidy paid, debts owing and other basic information needed to prepare Statements of Entitlement for families. The Provider Entry Point also has the basic functionality to enable a child care service to send government information required to administer the Child Care Subsidy, including submitting notices and reports such as change in circumstances, enrolment notices, session reports, and applications for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing).

The decision to use third-party software is a business decision for each provider.

Providers will receive advice and notifications about family entitlements and the subsidies paid through the Child Care Subsidy System. Providers will also be notified if they are not meeting their obligations and deadlines or other conditions of their approval.

Transparency is important for families when the subsidy is being paid directly to providers. Families claiming Child Care Subsidy will be able to see and review the information being given by providers about their entitlements and will receive periodic notifications so they can check if information relating to their children's care is correct. Families can access the Child Care Subsidy System through their Centrelink online account.

What systems do providers need to set up to administer child care subsidies?

Providers need to have systems and hardware in place to:

- record attendance and absences
- provide Statements of Entitlement, invoices and receipts
- action employee background checks, complaints and other matters.

A number of companies have developed and can provide approved third-party software. For the list of approved registered third-party software providers, see www.docs.education.gov.au/node/3300.

Some third-party software will manage these records, and interact with the Child Care Subsidy System. The type of system a provider uses for service management and record keeping is a business decision. Providers will need to decide what kind of system works best for the type and size of child care service they plan to operate.

Providers may wish to wait until their application for provider approval has been assessed and approval granted before investing in third-party software.

For more information about the reports and notifications that providers will need to submit or produce, and why and when they are required, see:

- the provider submits an enrolment notice (Section 3)
- session reports (Section 6)
- Statements of Entitlement are issued to families by providers (Section 6)
- record keeping and notifications (Section 7).

2. Becoming an approved provider





2. Becoming an approved provider

The following kinds of entities may apply for provider approval:

- an individual (such as a sole trader)
- a body corporate (such as a company)
- two or more individuals or entities who have formed a partnership
- an unincorporated body that has a distinct governing committee
- certain other 'eligible associations' or 'prescribed entities' as defined under the Education and Care Services National Law.

To deliver child care services for which an individual may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, a provider must be approved by a delegate of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

A child care provider can operate under the National Law or other state or territory child care laws (as approved or registered by the relevant state or territory authority) and charge fees for its services. However, Child Care Subsidy cannot be claimed for those services without the provider being approved by the Department of Education and Training.

A provider must meet a number of legal obligations when applying for provider approval from the Department of Education and Training — and must continue to meet these if approved. The obligations are set out in this section of the Handbook.

An approved provider can deliver one or more approved child care services. The service or services they may provide are linked to their provider approval. A provider can apply to add or remove a service from their approval. To remain approved, a provider must continue to operate at least one approved service.

An approved service can only be operated by the approved provider and must continue to be delivered as the same type of service that was approved. This means that if a service is sold by a provider to another provider, that provider will need to obtain its own separate approval. The provider must continue to comply with any conditions of their approval. The provider must also keep records and inform the Department of Education and Training about various matters and events.

It is important to understand that obtaining approval from the Department of Education and Training to deliver child care services for which an individual can become eligible for Child Care Subsidy is a separate approval process from that administered by state and territory regulators of child care services. For contact details for state and territory government approvals, see www.acecqa.gov.au.

Types of eligible child care services

Four types of child care service are able to be approved by the Department of Education and Training for the provision of Child Care Subsidy under Family Assistance Law:

1. Centre Based Day Care
2. Family Day Care
3. Outside School Hours Care
4. In Home Care.

Each type of care, and some basic rules that apply, is described in more detail in the following sections.

A provider may deliver different types of approved services. For example, a provider may offer a Centre Based Day Care service and an Outside School Hours Care service. A separate approval is required for each service that the provider delivers if Child Care Subsidy is to be payable for that service.

A provider may also offer different types of care under the same service approval at a single location. For example, an approved Centre Based Day Care service may provide care to both non-school aged and school aged children. Similarly, an Outside School Hours Care service may provide care to both school aged and non-school aged children. The type of service approval will be determined by the care mostly provided by that service, that is, whether care was mostly provided to school aged children or non-school aged children.

Minimum periods of operation generally apply to each service type. Services wishing to operate for less than the required minimum operating period will need to seek a determination from the Department of Education and Training. Services will need to demonstrate that special circumstances apply that make it appropriate for the service to operate for a shorter period. For example, consideration may be given to evidence that shows a service operates in an area where seasonal demand is high or that it operates as a sole provider in the area.

Some services (those that were Budget Based Funded Services prior to July 2018, and new services that are listed at Section 50 of the Minister's Rules) are exempt from minimum operating period requirements, and meeting National Law and state and territory requirements (for the purposes of the Child Care Subsidy), though they will generally fall within one of these categories.

1. Centre Based Day Care

This is child care that is provided in centres that are approved by the relevant state or territory authority. It can include any pattern or arrangement of care provided in this setting.

Minimum periods of operation

Centre Based Day Care must operate for at least 48 weeks per year.

Beyond this minimum, the provider can decide on the hours of care provided per day and the number of days per week. Providers can consider flexible options that suit their children and families, as well as their business.

2. Family Day Care

This child care is usually provided in the home of an educator. An educator may provide care in their home for a group of children, although rules apply — see below. Family Day Care must be provided as part of an approved service, by an approved provider.

Minimum periods of operation

Family Day Care services must operate for at least 48 weeks per year.

Maximum number of children

No more than seven children at a time may be in the care of each Family Day Care educator, and no more than four of the children can be preschool age or under. These are requirements of the National Law (not the Family Assistance Law). For more details of the National Law relating to Family Day Care, see the ACECQA website (www.acecqa.gov.au).

Under the Family Assistance Law, children who are a niece/nephew, cousin or grand/great-grandchild of a Family Day Care educator must make up fewer than half of the children to whom the educator is providing care within any fortnight.

Care of own children or siblings excluded from Child Care Subsidy

There is no entitlement to Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy where a Family Day Care educator, or their partner, cares for:

- their or their partner's child, including a foster care child, adopted child, kinship child or child for which they otherwise have legal responsibility, or
- their or their partner's brother, sister, half-brother or half-sister, step-brother or step-sister.

Care of a Family Day Care educator's children by other Family Day Care educators

There is no entitlement to Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy where a Family Day Care educator's, or their partner's, child is provided with care by any Family Day Care service if they (the educator) provide care for a Family Day Care service on that same day, unless (in summary) either:

- the child is one of the following:
 - an eligible disability child (has evidence of current diagnosis by a qualified practitioner of a recognised condition)
 - an eligible Inclusion Support Program child (for whom the service is receiving Inclusion Support Program assistance)
 - a remote area child (living in an area designated as remote, or very remote, under the Australian Standard Geographical Classification)

or:

- the parent has supplied evidence that, at the usual time that care is provided, they either:
 - work in paid work that is not for an approved Family Day Care service, or
 - study (are enrolled in education or training towards a recognised qualification provided by a registered training organisation).

More details about these circumstances are available in the Minister's Rules. See Part 2 Division 1 — Circumstances where no one is eligible for a session of care (section 8 (2)).

Where there is eligibility, records must be updated so that entitlements can be determined.

Records must also be kept of care that is provided at premises other than the educator's home.

3. Outside School Hours Care

This provides care before and after school hours and during school holidays for children who normally attend school.

Children who do not attend school may attend Outside School Hours Care (for example, a service may provide care for preschool aged siblings of school aged children), and the mix of children attending the service can vary from day-to-day, or week-to-week. However, an Outside School Hours Care service must be designed to predominantly care for school aged children.

Minimum periods of operation

Outside School Hours Care services must operate for at least seven weeks per year.

Beyond this minimum, the provider can decide the hours of care provided per day and the number of days per week. Providers can consider flexible options that suit families, as well as their business.

4. In Home Care

In Home Care is a flexible child care option, providing care in the family home and is available to families unable to access Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care due to their unique circumstances and where one or more of the following criteria apply:

- parents or carers are working non-standard or variable hours, outside normal child care service hours
- parents or carers are geographically isolated from other types of approved child care, particularly in rural or remote locations
- the family has challenging or complex needs, including where families are experiencing challenging situations, and other approved child care services are not able to meet the needs of the child or the family.

Families accessing In Home Care due to challenging or complex needs may have circumstances that include one or more of the following:

- a child with additional needs or a disability whose early childhood education and care requirements cannot be catered for in another approved child care setting, or through other government funded or community-based services
- a family where a parent is undergoing treatment for a serious illness
- other complex family situations that prevent families from accessing other approved child care types.

In Home Care must be provided as part of an approved service, by an approved provider.

Minimum periods of operation

In Home Care services must operate for at least 48 weeks per year.

Maximum number of children

No more than five children at a time may be in the care of each In Home Care educator, and no more than four of the children can be preschool age or under. All children must be from the same family.

If there are more than the maximum number of children in the family requiring In Home Care, then a second educator may be engaged for another session of care.

Care for own family excluded from Child Care Subsidy

There is no entitlement to Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy where an In Home Care educator cares for:

- their or their partner's child, including a foster care child, adopted child, kinship child or child for which they otherwise have legal responsibility, or
- their or their partner's brother, sister, half-brother or half-sister, step-brother or step-sister
- their or their partner's niece, nephew, cousin, grandchild or great-grandchild.

Care of an In Home Care educator's children by other In Home Care educators

There is no entitlement to Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy where an In Home Care educator's, or their partner's, child is provided with care by any In Home Care service if they (the educator) provide care for an In Home Care service on that same day.

In Home Care Support Agencies

Providers and services must be registered with the relevant In Home Care Support Agency to provide In Home Care Services in that state/territory.

In Home Care Support Agencies service each state and territory, ensuring the program maintains a focus on quality early childhood education and care and advocating for families and supporting them to find care that meets their needs.

In Home Care Support Agencies will assess the family's suitability for In Home Care and match those families to suitable services that have the capability to provide care that meets the family's needs. They will work with the family to develop a Family Management Plan tailored to meet the family's unique needs and will identify referral pathways to disability and family support services including government funded and community based services, where appropriate.

In Home Care Support Agencies provide recommendations to the Department of Education and Training on the allocation of places. Taking these recommendations into account, the Department allocates places to services for families who are suitable for the In Home Care service type, with the focus being on an equitable distribution of places nationally.

For more information, see the In Home Care National Guidelines (www.education.gov.au/in-home-care).

In Home Care educator qualifications

In Home Care educators are required to have a minimum Certificate III level qualification in a relevant course, or be working towards a Certificate III qualification and provide documentary evidence. A Certificate III, a diploma or a degree in Early Childhood Education or equivalent qualifications that have a major focus on Early Childhood Education are acceptable qualifications

Entities that can become approved child care providers

State and territory approval and registration

With some exceptions, child care providers and services must be approved or registered by the state or territory authority responsible for early childhood education and care in the location of the service.

Services that are not able to be approved for Child Care Subsidy

Services cannot be approved under Family Assistance Law if they are any of the following:

- informal care through personal arrangements (for example, babysitting)
- primarily provide:
 - instruction in an activity, such as sport or music, or
 - a disability or early intervention service
- care where the child's parent primarily provides care or is readily available during the interval and retains responsibility for the child while the service is provided, such as a playgroup or toy library
- a service primarily providing short-term irregular care at a place where the parent is a visitor and is readily available, such as a crèche service provided by a gym
- a service that primarily provides an early educational program to children in the year that is two years before Year 1 of school, such as a preschool or kindergarten.

Mixed or integrated services can still be approved if they include such activities, but not if this is the service they primarily provide.

Eligible business structures

The table below describes the entities that can become approved child care providers and indicates what information is required in an application for provider approval.

If a person operates a business in Australia and does not trade under their own name, they need to register a business name with the Australian Business Register.

Table 1: Descriptions of types of entities that can become approved child care providers, with details of the information required in their applications

Entity type	Description	Information required with application for provider approval
Sole trader	An individual person who has legal capacity and/or authority to enter into obligations in their own right.	Evidence of place of business (for example, lease agreement).
Partnership	A collection of entities (for example, made up of individuals, companies or other corporate bodies etc.) where the control or	A copy of the signed partnership agreement/deed between all members of the partnership.

	management of the business is shared.	
Private company	A company registered with the Australian Security and Investments Commission as Proprietary Limited (cannot raise funds from the general public).	<p>Historical and Current Company Extract Report from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, no older than three months from the date of application.</p> <p>This report includes the names and addresses of current and previous Company Directors, Secretaries, and other office holders, as well as company shareholders and the Australian Company Number (ACN).</p>
Public company	A public company is registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and is usually formed to raise or borrow public money by listing the company's shares for trading on the stock exchange.	Historical and Current Company Extract Report from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission no older than three months from the date of application.
Incorporated body/ association	An entity in its own right which is separate from the individual members and given legal status by state/territory legislation, for example the <i>Associations Incorporation Act 1981</i> (Victoria), and will have a constitution or rules setting out how it is to operate.	<p>Constitution or rules of association.</p> <p>Annual general meeting minutes (if applicable). List of elected office bearers.</p> <p>Financial statement for previous financial year.</p> <p>A letters patent (if applicable).</p>
Indigenous corporation	An Indigenous corporation is voluntarily registered under the <i>Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006</i> .	<p>Rules/constitution of association.</p> <p>Annual general meeting minutes (if applicable). List of elected office bearers.</p>
Registered co-operative	A co-operative is a democratic organisation, owned and controlled by its members for a common benefit. The name of a registered co-operative always includes the word 'Co-operative' or 'Co-op' and ends with 'Limited' or 'Ltd'.	<p>List of directors — this should include details of directors' addresses and occupations.</p> <p>Certified copy of the rules as registered.</p> <p>Board appointed person — name of person appointed by the Board who is responsible for daily activities of the Society.</p>
Unincorporated body	An unincorporated body is not a separate legal entity from its members. It is simply the group itself, of people who have agreed to come together to pursue a common purpose with club-like characteristics, for example, a sporting club, social club or trade union.	<p>Governing document(s) outlining the relevant rules and how the governing body will be run.</p> <p>Evidence that the person has authority to apply (for example, a delegation letter).</p> <p>Evidence of a governing body should take the form of governing documents that clearly set out rules about how the unincorporated body will be run, and specify items such as decision-making, liability, management of resources and membership. The format these documents may take and what they will cover depends on the size of the organisation. At a minimum, it is important to have financial controls (like rules around who can handle money) and rules for managing issues such as conflicts of interest and how to handle complaints.</p>

Body politic (government entity)	Australian or state and territory government bodies are not required to register their name or any name they trade under as a business name, but may still wish to do so under some circumstances.	Australian, state/territory or local government entity — evidence that the person has authority to apply (for example, a delegation letter). For a local government entity — an extract of relevant legislation. This should set out the manner in which the Council can enter into contracts.
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Roles of specified personnel

People managing or employed in child care in particular roles in relation to the approval and operation of a service are permitted to undertake related actions through the Child Care Subsidy System. They therefore need to be identified in either:

- the application for provider approval, or
- later notifications, if not employed or engaged at the time of approval.

Table 2: The role of people employed in or managing child care and the actions they are each allowed in relation to the Child Care Subsidy System

Role	Allowed actions in relation to the Child Care Subsidy System
Persons with management or control of the provider These are people who participate directly or indirectly in the decision making or management of the provider (the legal entity) that operates the child care service. Depending on the structure of the organisation and involvement of the individual, this may include the executive officers, board members, officers of the body corporate, the partners or a member of the organisation's governing body.	These people may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change bank account details and other information regarding the child care service • add and remove other persons, such as persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service from the Child Care Subsidy System • authorise data submission transactions to the Child Care Subsidy System • notify the Department of Education and Training of the cessation of operations • submit an application to add or remove a service.
Person or persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service	Nominated by the persons with management or control of the provider, they may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add and remove persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service and service contacts • authorise data submission transactions to the Child Care Subsidy System • notify the Department of Education and Training of changes in respect of the service for which they are responsible, excluding bank account details and cessation of operations.
Service contact These are people nominated by the persons with management and control of the provider or responsible for day-to-day operation of the service who are authorised to discuss family entitlements and transaction processing results with the Department of Education and Training.	They can notify the Department of non-financial contact details including addresses and phone numbers, but they cannot notify the Department about any other changes to information about a service.

Family Day Care Educator

These are people contracted, engaged or employed by a Family Day Care provider to provide care for children and record attendance information.

Family Day Care educators are specified personnel, but do not interact directly with the Child Care Subsidy System.

Providers, managers and educators must be fit and proper persons

A child care provider's directors, managers and staff (and board members, where applicable) — including staff with management or control and people responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service, Family Day Care educators and In Home Care educators — must be 'fit and proper persons' to operate a child care service and to administer Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy. Matters involving fraud, dishonesty or negligence can affect whether or not these people are fit and proper and are considered relevant in the decision about whether a provider or service is approved.

Specified personnel must be fit and proper persons, whether or not they are required to use the Child Care Subsidy System.

Issues taken into account may include:

- evidence of activity that does not comply with criminal or civil law, including (but not limited to) activity related to children, or indicating dishonesty or violence
- court proceedings, convictions or findings of guilt, including (but not limited to) activity related to children, or indicating dishonesty or violence
- any past administrative decisions relating to a person's suitability to be involved in child care
- evidence of fraud or dishonesty
- the person's history of managing public funds, and any past or current debts to the Commonwealth
- the person's record of financial management, including any instances of bankruptcy, insolvency or external administration
- any potential conflicts of interest between managing or delivering the child care service and other business or financial interests of the person
- any other matter relevant to the suitability of the provider and their staff.

Required background checks

To help determine whether people are fit and proper persons, the provider must carry out the following checks for each specified person. The provider must be able to provide a written record of those checks, including the evidence provided in support of the applications, at any time if requested.

A police check must be no more than six months old, and other checks no more than three months old, at the time of the application or the addition of the specified person to the provider's approval. However, new checks are not required every three or six months.

Working with children cards (where required) must always be kept current. Expired cards are unacceptable.

Table 3: The role of people employed in or managing child care and the checks required to determine they are fit and proper persons

Checks required	A person with management or control of the provider	A person with responsibility for day-to-day operation of the service	A Family Day Care or In Home Care educator
A National Police Certificate from the state or territory police service (or an agency accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission) no more than six months before the date of the application	✓	✓	✓
A check in relation to the issue of a working with children card (if required to hold one)	✓	✓	✓
A National Personal Insolvency Index check performed using the Bankruptcy Register Search service provided by the Australian Financial Security Authority	✓		
A current and historical personal name extract search of the records of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission	✓		

Applying for provider approval

To start an application for provider approval, the applicant (or the applicant's representative) will access the secure Child Care Subsidy System through the Provider Entry Point.

The Provider Entry Point

This is part of the secure Child Care Subsidy System.

Applicants can apply for provider and service approval using the Provider Entry Point. Approved providers can use the Provider Entry Point to access information, add or remove a service, make notice of a change in their circumstances, and give enrolment notices and session reports to receive Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy on behalf of families.

For user guidance for the Provider Entry Point, see www.education.gov.au/child-care-providers.

To access the Provider Entry Point, the provider (or, if not an individual, their authorised representative) first needs to register with PRODA (Provider Digital Access). Documents that provide evidence of identity are required for this registration.

Provider Digital Access (PRODA)

The purpose of PRODA is to verify a person's digital identity. Once their identity has been verified through PRODA, they can interact with the Australian Government online for a range of purposes, without needing to verify their identity each time.

Their PRODA identification remains with them and can be used for future child care employers, positions and applications.

Who needs to register with PRODA?

The applicant (or the applicant representative) will need to register with PRODA as the first step towards creating an application for approval in the Provider Entry Point.

Specified child care personnel who have already been identified at the time of application for approval must also be registered with PRODA and identified in the application for approval.

PRODA identification is required for all specified personnel, whether or not they will use the Child Care Subsidy System themselves:

- persons with management or control of the provider
- persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service
- service contacts
- Family Day Care and In Home Care educators.

People involved with the service who undertake roles other than these — such as Centre Based Day Care educators, kitchen or outdoor staff — do not need to be registered with PRODA.

How do applicants register with PRODA?

Register with PRODA at www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/proda. Each person must create their own account, using a computer with internet access.

The process will require them to:

- create a unique user name and password
- create security questions and answers
- provide information from their identity documents — such as a passport, driver's licence or Medicare card.

At the end of the registration process, the person will receive a PRODA Registration Authority (RA) Number. Each person must keep their PRODA user name and password secure and confidential.

Their PRODA RA number must also be kept secure. It may be shared with providers, as they will need their specified personnel's PRODA RA number to link them in the Child Care Subsidy System.

The provider will need to notify the government through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point when they employ new specified personnel. The new personnel will need to be registered in PRODA and linked to the provider's approval.

Submitting an application for provider approval

Once the individual who will be the provider (or is representing the business or organisation) has registered with PRODA, they need to use their PRODA user name and password to log in to the Provider Entry Point and commence an application. An application includes the information shown in Table 4.

Table 4: *Information the provider needs to include to submit an application on the Provider Entry Point*

Category	Information required
Applicant	<p>Name</p> <p>Contact details</p> <p>Proof of identity (via PRODA) — Registration Authority (RA) number</p>
Provider	<p>Full legal name and proposed trading name</p> <p>Street and postal addresses</p> <p>ABN</p> <p>Approval number from the state or territory authority</p> <p>Name and contact details for each person with management or control</p> <p>If applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if applying as a trustee — a copy of the relevant trust deed • details of registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.
Background checks	<p>Details of working with children cards</p> <p>Where the provider is an individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of place of business (for example, a lease agreement) <p>Where the provider is a company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a current and historical company extract obtained through the Australian Securities and Investments Commission website, no older than three months before the date of application. <p>See Table 1 for evidence required by other applicant entity types.</p>
Potential or perceived conflict of interest	<p>The identity of any company that owns or controls the applicant</p> <p>A declaration regarding any other businesses in which the provider has an interest, and where there might be an actual or perceived conflict of interest, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the interest is in a registered training organisation which may award qualifications to educators, or • the interest might otherwise compromise the provider's ability to comply with their legal obligations.
Proposed services	<p>For every service to be added to the provider's approval:</p> <p>the proposed name of the service (if a business name has been registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, that name)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any approval number issued by a state or territory authority, in relation to approval or registration of the education and care service • the type of service being applied for • the physical address where the service proposes to provide the care • the name and contact details for each person responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service • for each individual responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service, an Australian

National Police Criminal History Check from the relevant state or territory police service or an agency accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, obtained no more than six months prior to the date of the application

- for a proposed Family Day Care or In Home Care service, a declaration that all proposed educators are fit and proper persons having regard to any prior actions involving fraud or dishonesty, and that they have the capacity to comply with the law.

Approval process

Once a complete application is submitted, the Department of Education and Training assesses this against eligibility requirements. The applicant can use the Provider Entry Point to communicate with the Department of Education and Training about their application and submit additional information that may be requested as part of the assessment process.

The Department of Education and Training will decide on each application as soon as possible, but is not required to do this in a set period of time.

The effective start date for approval for Child Care Subsidy may be backdated to the date the application was submitted. It cannot be backdated to prior to that, and not before 2 July 2018, whichever is later

Conditions may be placed on an approval. To maintain approval, the provider must comply with those conditions.

What if an application is not approved?

If an application is refused, and the applicant is not satisfied with the reasons given, they can ask the Department of Education and Training to review its decision. Changes to the application, or additional information, may be needed.

If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of an internal review, they can ask for review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (www.aat.gov.au) or make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman (www.ombudsman.gov.au).

Adding or removing a service

Applications to add or remove a service are made through the Provider Entry Point, or third-party software if it provides this facility.

Adding a service to a provider approval

An application to add a service to an existing provider's approval must contain:

- the provider's ID number
- applicant name and contact details
- for each service to be added:
 - the proposed name of the service (if a business name has been registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, use that name)
 - any related approval number issued by a state or territory regulatory authority
 - the type of service being applied for

- the physical and postal address of the service
- the name and contact details for each person responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service.

For each person responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service:

- an Australian National Police Criminal History Check obtained from the relevant state or territory police service, or an agency accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, obtained no more than six months prior to the date of the application
- where the application relates to a Family Day Care or In Home Care service, a declaration that all proposed educators are fit and proper persons having regard to any prior actions involving fraud or dishonesty and their capacity to comply with the Family Assistance Law.

Removing a service from an approval

An approved provider must continue to operate at least one approved service.

An application to remove a service from a provider's approval must contain:

- the provider's ID number
- applicant name and contact details
- for each service to be removed:
 - the service ID number
 - the reason for requesting the removal of the service
 - the requested end date for the service approval
 - where the provider is selling, or has sold, the service, details of the legal entity to whom the service was or is to be transferred.

3. Enrolling children



3. Enrolling children

The enrolment of children is an important step for approved child care providers. It is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend child care (or have an arrangement for care) to have an enrolment notice regardless of their Child Care Subsidy eligibility status. For those eligible individuals and children, entitlement determinations will not occur without the correct enrolment in place. An enrolment links:

- the child
- the family (the individual)
- the child care service.

Providers must submit an 'enrolment notice' in the Child Care Subsidy System to indicate when they have entered into an arrangement with an individual or organisation and a child is enrolled. Once a provider has submitted an enrolment notice, they are also required to report attendance for that child.

Providers may need to create multiple enrolment notices for a child if there is more than one arrangement to provide care to that child, for example, where either:

- a child is considered a dependent child of two families, such as when separated parents share the care of a child, or
- the fees for some sessions of care provided to a child are paid for by a third party (such as an employer) and for other sessions by the parent(s).

Who is 'the individual' responsible for the child's care?

This Handbook refers to 'the individual' — meaning the person who is responsible for a child's care and liable to pay child care fees. They may be the adult legally responsible for the child's care, or their partner.

In many cases, 'the individual' is the child's parent. However, the individual may be another adult who is legally responsible for the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child. They could be the partner of the child's parent, an adoptive or foster parent, a grandparent or other relative of the child.

One or more individuals may be responsible for the child's care and liable to pay the child care fees.

If a third party — such as the state, an employer or other organisation — is liable for all or part of the child's child care fees, there is no Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy payable for the part of the fees for which the organisation is liable. Only individuals can be eligible for these subsidies.

When 'the individual' is the child's grandparent

In cases where 'the individual' is the child's grandparent, they may be eligible for and receive Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent).

Child Care Subsidy can support:

- grandparent principal carers not on income support

- grandparents who are not principal carers of their grandchildren, but have regular or shared care of the child (that is, they care for them between 14 per cent and 64 per cent of the time).

Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) can provide increased support where the grandparent is the principal caregiver of their grandchildren and is on income support. Eligible grandparents need to apply directly to Centrelink for this additional support.

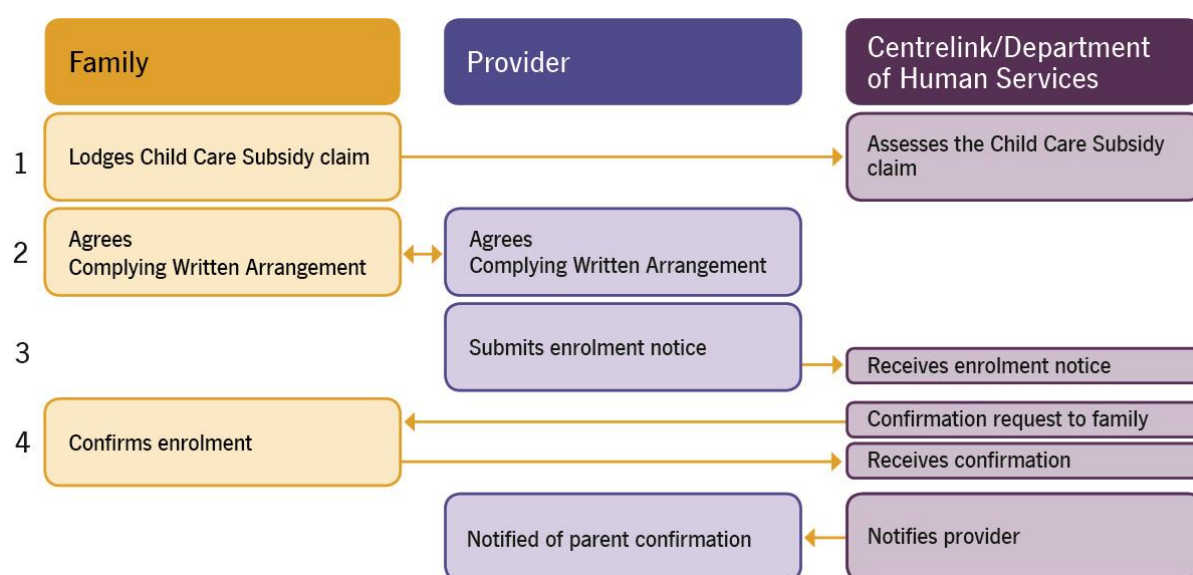
The enrolment process

There are four steps to enrol a child.

1. The individual makes a claim for Child Care Subsidy with Centrelink
2. The provider and individual agree an arrangement for care of a child
3. The provider submits an enrolment notice
4. The individual confirms the enrolment.

The process is outlined in the diagram below, and each step (1–4) is described in more detail in the following sections. The first two steps do not have to occur in this order, but no subsidy can be paid until all four steps have been completed.

Figure 2: Summary of the four main steps to enrol a child with a child care provider when claiming the Child Care Subsidy from Centrelink



Once this enrolment process is successfully completed, entitlements can be calculated and payments made.

Please note that the following four sections of the Handbook correspond with numbers in the process diagram above.

1. The individual makes a claim for Child Care Subsidy with Centrelink

Child care providers are not directly involved in the making of a claim for Child Care Subsidy by the individual or their partner. However, the individual or their partner must make a claim, and be determined to be eligible, in order for Child Care Subsidy entitlement to be determined.

The family should create or access their Centrelink online account via www.my.gov.au to lodge a Child Care Subsidy Claim for their child.

Where possible, providers should encourage parents or carers to lodge their claim before enrolling their child. A Child Care Subsidy claim can stay active for a year without any sessions of care being reported for the child. However, Child Care Subsidy claims can only be backdated to a maximum of 28 days before the claim was made. If a child is enrolled and starts attending care before a claim is made, and the claim is delayed, the individual will not be eligible for Child Care Subsidy for any sessions of care that occurred more than 28 days before.

Providers should note that any subsidy payable for the 28-day period before a claim was made will generally be paid to the individual, not to the provider.

Centrelink will check and confirm the eligibility of the individual and child for Child Care Subsidy.

Families are responsible for updating Centrelink with any changes to their income, activity and other circumstances, which they can do through their Centrelink online account. Providers do not need to obtain, record or submit this information.

Information for families

Families can create or access their Centrelink online account and lodge a claim for Child Care Subsidy through myGov.

Information for families about Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy is available on the Department of Human Services website.

Families can call Centrelink about Child Care Subsidy and other family payments on 136 150, from Monday to Friday, 8am–8pm, including for staff assistance in completing the claim form.

For information about contacting Centrelink with extra needs such as accessibility, languages, translations, hearing or speech impairment see www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/contact-us.

2. The provider and individual agree an arrangement for care of a child

The provider must agree up-front with the individual on the planned arrangements for care of a child. The terms of an arrangement are a matter for the provider and individual, based on the particular circumstances.

The only type of arrangement that can enable families to receive Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy is called a 'Complying Written Arrangement'. A Complying Written Arrangement is an agreement to provide care in return for fees. A Complying Written Arrangement must include certain information, but as long as it meets these requirements, it can be established through the same enrolment form or process the provider would normally use to enrol a child.

An arrangement must be recorded, in either hardcopy (paper) or electronic form and kept by the provider. An arrangement can cover more than one child, if multiple children in a family will attend a child care service (though each child must have their own enrolment).

Types of arrangement

There are four types of arrangement:

- Complying Written Arrangement
- Relevant Arrangement
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) — provider eligible arrangement
- Arrangement with an organisation (third party).

An enrolment notice is required for each child attending the service, for any kind of arrangement. The description, and eligibility, of each type of arrangement is set out in the table below.

The enrolment notice will reflect the type of arrangement that is in place between the provider and the family/individual or organisation.

Table 5: The four different types of child care arrangements with details of each and information about whether Child Care Subsidy / Additional Child Care Subsidy is payable

Arrangement type	Description	Is Child Care Subsidy / Additional Child Care Subsidy payable?
Complying Written Arrangement	<p>A Complying Written Arrangement must set out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the names and contact details of the provider and the individual(s) • the date that the arrangement starts • the name and date of birth of the child (or children) • if care will be provided on a routine basis, and if so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — details about the days on which sessions of care will usually be provided, and — the usual start and end times for these sessions of care • whether care may be provided on a casual or flexible basis (in addition to, or instead of, a routine basis) details of fees to be charged under the arrangement (this can be by reference to a fee schedule or information available on the provider's website maintained by the provider), that the parties understand may vary from time to time. <p>Additional information can be included to support the individual's understanding of their payment obligations.</p>	Yes — Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy
Relevant Arrangement	<p>An arrangement between the provider and individual for the care of a child that does not meet the full requirements for a Complying Written Arrangement.</p> <p>Child Care Subsidy is not payable for care provided under a relevant arrangement. This type of enrolment notice is used only where a provider is sure that the family does not wish to claim Child Care Subsidy for the sessions of care they are going to provide, or the child's eligibility is not confirmed.</p>	No

Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) — Provider Eligible Arrangement	Where a provider has identified a child is at risk of serious neglect or abuse, but no eligible individual can be identified. In this case, the provider effectively becomes eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy for that child, rather than an individual.	Yes — Additional Child Care Subsidy
Arrangement with an organisation (third party)	Made when another party (for example, an employer, other organisation, or the state — such as for participants in the Adult Migrant English Program) is liable for the fees for care of the child.	No

For a relevant arrangement, or arrangement with an organisation, the provider invoices the individual or the organisation for the full fee as agreed in the arrangement, because no subsidy applies. However, an enrolment notice and session reports are required to be submitted for a relevant arrangement, and are encouraged to be submitted for an arrangement with an organisation.

An arrangement can cover routine and/or casual care

A Complying Written Arrangement needs to establish the basis on which the two parties expect care will be provided. This includes whether the arrangement includes routine sessions (booked days), is casual only, or is a mix of both. If there are routine sessions, the arrangement must indicate the usual days and session times.

If casual care is included in the arrangement, it may also set out relevant terms (for example, whether there is a minimum period of care, that it is subject to availability, and so on).

Establishing the routine sessions in a Complying Written Arrangement does not remove flexibility for the child to attend on other days (for example, when the parent wants to work an extra shift), or not attend on routine days (for example, where the family is on holidays), as agreed with the provider.

Inclusion of fees in a Complying Written Arrangement

Child care fees must be part of the arrangement with a family and usual fee information must be included in the enrolment notice.

The fees are a matter to be agreed between the provider and family. There are no set minimum or maximum fees that the provider may charge, but there are caps on the subsidy which may be paid. These are set out in detail under the section on Child Care Subsidy.

Hourly session fees are the amount that the individual, or the partner, is liable to pay for a session of care, divided by the number of hours in the session; and reduced by:

- the hourly rate of any subsidy (other than Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy) that the individual benefits from for that session — such as a subsidy paid by the parent's employer to reduce their child care fees
- the amount per hour of any reimbursement fringe benefit that is paid to the individual for that session.

Hourly session fees are required to calculate Child Care Subsidy entitlements, but providers may charge fees on a sessional basis.

Where the individual will be liable for a range of different fees depending on the type of care used, or discounts and surcharges that may apply at certain times, it is open to providers to include a fee schedule as an attachment to a Complying Written Arrangement (that is updated as needed). Regardless of the way fee information is included, it must be clear that all fees that may be charged have been accepted by the individual as part of the arrangement.

Ensuring the individual understands the arrangement

It is important that parents understand the arrangement they are entering into, including the fees they will usually be charged and how these might vary in particular circumstances. In addition to being a good business practice and reducing the likelihood of disputes during the enrolment, this will also reduce the likelihood of the enrolment confirmation process (see 3 below) being unnecessarily delayed due to a parent not understanding details presented for confirmation.

3. The provider submits an enrolment notice

Once the provider has made an arrangement with an individual, they can create a new enrolment notice through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

The provider must submit an enrolment notice for each child at each service, irrespective of what type of arrangement is in place. If a written arrangement covers more than one child, or more than one service, a separate enrolment notice must be provided for each child at each service.

When is an enrolment notice required?

An initial enrolment notice must be submitted within seven days from either:

- the end of the week in which the provider and family entered into an arrangement
- the provider or service being approved (if after the start of the arrangement or attendance), or
- the end of a suspension of service (if an approved service has been suspended by the Department of Education and Training and the enrolment occurs during the period of suspension).

Types of enrolment — routine and/or casual care

An enrolment needs to identify the expected pattern of care, based on the Complying Written Arrangement. These can be either:

- routine sessions, with casual care permitted
- casual enrolment — no routine sessions are included, or
- routine sessions only — casual care is not included.

If parents do not know whether or when they might use casual sessions of care, including casual session fee/s in the Complying Written Arrangement and corresponding enrolment notice allows parents to understand and confirm that this is what they will be charged if they ever happen to use a casual session.

This may include minimum time periods for casual sessions, and hourly rates specific for casual care.

Information required for an enrolment notice

All of the information set out in Table 6 below is required for an enrolment notice related to a Complying Written Arrangement. Some of the information will not apply to enrolments related to other types of arrangement — once a type of arrangement is selected, the third-party software or Provider Entry Point will request the information relevant to that arrangement type.

Through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point, the provider will be able to view, create, update or cease enrolments for all children attending their service(s). The provider will also be able to see the complete enrolment history (all current and ceased enrolment notices) for each child enrolled.

Table 6: *The information required for an enrolment notice related to a Complying Written Arrangement, listed by category*

Category	Details to be provided
Enrolment circumstances	<p>Whether either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an arrangement for care has been made, or a certificate or determination has been made for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing). <p>Whether the arrangement is any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Complying Written Arrangement, or a Relevant Arrangement, or Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) — provider eligible, or an arrangement with an organisation.
Expected pattern of care	<p>Whether this includes any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> routine sessions, with casual care permitted, or casual enrolment — no routine sessions are included, or routine sessions only — casual care is not included.
Dates	<p>Date the care arrangement was entered into.</p> <p>End date for the arrangement (if known at the time the arrangement was created).</p>
Parties to the arrangement	<p>Names of individuals (or organisation) who have entered into the agreement — usually the same as the Child Care Subsidy claimant but can be someone else (for example, where dad is the Child Care Subsidy claimant, but mum enters into the arrangement with the service to provide care).</p> <p>If both parents are parties to the arrangement, enter the parent who is also the Child Care Subsidy claimant here.</p>
Child receiving care	<p>Child name</p> <p>Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN)</p> <p>Child date of birth</p>
Service providing care	<p>Service ID</p> <p>Regular educator (mandatory for Family Day Care)</p>
Individual for whom entitlements will be determined (the claimant)	<p>Individual's name</p> <p>Individual's CRN</p> <p>Individual's date of birth</p>

Session details and liability	Day of session
	Session start time
	Session end time
	Routine session/s — 'usual fee' (hourly fee or session fee)
	Casual session/s (if applicable) — hourly or session fee
	Liability for session fees — breakdown between individuals/third parties (for example, an employer, Adult Migrant English Program) and no individual (in the case of enrolment for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) — provider eligible)

4. The individual confirms the enrolment

After the provider submits an enrolment notice for a child, the individual will be notified and asked to review and check the main enrolment notice details. This will occur through their Centrelink online account (or Express Plus mobile app), accessed via myGov (www.my.gov.au). Where an individual cannot access myGov, they can confirm their enrolment over the phone with Centrelink, or by visiting a Centrelink office.

The individual must then do one of the following:

- confirm the enrolment — if they agree that the details are correct, or
- dispute details of the enrolment — if there are details they do not believe reflect the arrangement that they have agreed, or
- reject the enrolment — if the child is not enrolled at the service.

The provider can begin entering information (detailing the care actually provided) before the individual reviews the enrolment and responds. Once the enrolment is confirmed, entitlements will be calculated and payments can begin.

The provider will be notified through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point when the enrolment has been confirmed.

Disagreements over enrolment

If an individual disagrees with the details of an enrolment, at the point of enrolment confirmation they will send details of the disagreement back through their Centrelink online account, and these will be sent on to the provider. After reviewing the details that the individual disagreed with, the provider could either:

- agree there was an error and submit an updated enrolment notice with the correct information, or
- maintain that the details were correct, meaning the individual has possibly misread, or misunderstood, the details they disagreed with.

If the provider maintains that the details were correct, the provider will need to contact the individual to resolve the matter, before re-submitting the enrolment notice.

In either case, the enrolment will then be provided back to the individual for confirmation.

While a dispute is being resolved, the provider can continue to provide care for the child and must submit session reports, although payments will not be processed for those sessions. Once the disagreement is resolved and the enrolment is confirmed, payments will be calculated for session reports already submitted.

Through the enrolment confirmation process, the individual will also be able to indicate that their child is not enrolled at the service (as opposed to one or more of the enrolment details being incorrect). The provider will receive a notification if this occurs.

If an individual indicates the child is not enrolled, session reports will not be accepted for that enrolment (and payments will not be made). If the provider maintains that the child is enrolled, and the individual has made a mistake, they will need to contact the individual to explain and resolve the matter, before submitting a new enrolment notice (to be confirmed by the individual).

Shared care — separated parents

If a child's parents are separated, and both individuals (and their new partners) are liable for part of the cost of the child's child care fees, each individual will need to make their own claim for Child Care Subsidy to Centrelink. Each parent will also need to agree their own Complying Written Arrangement with the provider (or providers) who provide care to their child.

Each parent will be assessed separately for their entitlement to Child Care Subsidy, based on their income and activity levels.

In all circumstances, including shared care arrangements, the allocation of 42 absences per financial year in which Child Care Subsidy can be paid relates to each child, not to each individual claimant.

Where families have separated after commencement of the Complying Written Arrangement, the parent who is the Child Care Subsidy claimant must notify Centrelink of this change in their circumstances. Where the other parent who was not the Child Care Subsidy claimant wishes to receive Child Care Subsidy payments, they will be required to make their own claim, based on their individual income and activity levels.

If parents separate while care is being provided for their child under a single arrangement, they should advise their provider (as well as Centrelink) of the separation as soon as possible. The provider will need to create a new enrolment notice for the parent who was not previously the Child Care Subsidy claimant for the child, if that parent is taking on liability for the cost of some of the child care fees.

Once parents have separated and have been separately assessed for Child Care Subsidy by Centrelink, entitlements will be calculated individually. Maximum hours and annual caps will apply to each parent, depending on their circumstances, activity and income.

It is the responsibility of the provider of an approved child care service to ensure that each child's attendances are submitted under the enrolment for the parent with whom they have an arrangement and who is liable for paying the fees for those sessions of care.

If parents do not inform the provider of their changed circumstances, then it is the parents' responsibility to resolve any disputes they may have regarding Child Care Subsidy payments and fees.

Updating arrangements and enrolment notices

Updating a Complying Written Arrangement

Where there are certain changes to the arrangement for care between the provider and an individual, the provider must update the arrangement in writing (electronic or hardcopy).

When the provider must update an enrolment notice

The provider must update an enrolment notice if:

- the individual disagrees with detail/s of an enrolment, and the provider agrees an update is required
- an arrangement for care is varied, at the request or in discussion with the individual (and this has been reflected in the Complying Written Arrangement)
- the provider otherwise becomes aware that the information originally provided in an enrolment is (or becomes) incorrect – whether at the time of or after the enrolment notice was created
- the arrangement for care ends (note that if the enrolment notice included an arrangement end date (which is not mandatory) and the arrangement ends on that date, no update is needed).

An enrolment must be updated within seven days of the change or event to which the update relates.

In practice, the provider will update an existing notice through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point by editing the field/s where details have changed, leaving the remaining fields unchanged, and submitting the update.

Parent notification when enrolment is updated

The individual will receive notification whenever their enrolment is updated, but will usually not be required to confirm updates. They can review the updated details, and may disagree with the update if they believe it does not reflect the terms of the Complying Written Arrangement. The provider will be notified if an individual disputes an update to an enrolment.

Where an individual disagrees with one or more parts of the enrolment, Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for subsequent sessions of care submitted for that enrolment (after the disagreement occurs) but will be processed once the dispute is resolved. An individual can disagree with parts of an enrolment at any time (not just when a new enrolment is created), through their Centrelink online account.

Ceasing enrolments

Where an enrolment has an end date, the provider will be notified through the Child Care Subsidy System four weeks before that date. If care is going to continue under the arrangement, the enrolment must be updated, or else it will cease.

An enrolment is taken to have ceased for Child Care Subsidy purposes if the child does not attend a session of care for eight continuous weeks. The provider will be notified after four weeks of no sessions of care being reported. If care is going to continue, but the child will not be returning to care for eight weeks or more, a new Complying Written Arrangement and enrolment notice will be required.

Re-establishing a Complying Written Arrangement with a parent in these circumstances may be streamlined. For example, a provider and parent could review the previous Complying Written Arrangement, confirm that it will apply to the upcoming enrolment period, and update any details if necessary (for example, if fees have increased, or the parent requires different sessions of care). This would need to be done in writing such as by an exchange of emails or through a software system. The provider would then need to submit a new enrolment notice for the upcoming enrolment period.

If a provider submits absences after a child's last physical attendance, any Child Care Subsidy / Additional Child Care Subsidy paid for these absences will be recovered. This applies to enrolment notices which are automatically ceased by the Child Care Subsidy System, or where the provider ceases an enrolment notice by updating it with an arrangement end date.

Other matters regarding enrolment and allocation of child care places

Availability of child care places

The Australian Government places no general restrictions on the number of services or places that can be approved for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy. However, Minister's Rules may specify such restrictions as a condition of provider and/or service approval.

A restriction on child care places is currently applied to In Home Care, with 3000 places allocated nationally.

Providers must comply with any restrictions on the number of services or places that are approved by the state or territory authority.

The Australian Government collects information about child care vacancies and makes it available to families on the www.mychild.gov.au website.

Priority of access — prioritising vacancies

There are no mandatory requirements for filling vacancies, and providers can set their own policies for prioritising who receives a place.

However, as vacancies in a service arise, providers are asked to consider prioritising children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

This reflects the Australian Government’s intention to help families who are most in need, and support the safety and wellbeing of children at risk in accordance with the [Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009—2020](#).

Legislation references — enrolments

Legislation/Instrument	Main references
<i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i>	Part 3A Division 2 — Making claims Part 8 — Division 5 — Allocation of child care places Part 8A — Division 1 — Requirements in relation to enrolments and relevant arrangements
Child Care Subsidy Secretary’s Rules 2017	Part 4 — Provider requirements — Division 1 — Complying written arrangements

4. Child Care Subsidy



4. Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is the main payment to assist families with the costs of child care. It is generally paid directly to providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction.

Families make a co-contribution to their child care fees and pay the provider the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.

There are three main aspects of Child Care Subsidy:

1. An individual's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy
2. Types of child care and sessions of care covered by Child Care Subsidy
3. Amount of Child Care Subsidy payments (entitlement).

Each of these is described in more detail in the following sections.

While a provider or service is not directly involved in the calculation of a family's entitlements (this is a matter between the family and Centrelink) it is important that providers understand the rules relating to Child Care Subsidy so they can discuss with families the amount of fee reduction families will receive and the balance of the fee charged that families will need to pay to the provider.

Providers should encourage families to provide true and complete information to Centrelink for the purposes of claiming Child Care Subsidy. This is a legal requirement of families, and the provision of incorrect information may result in families incurring debts that need to be recovered at a later date.

Information for families

Families can access a range of more detailed information about their entitlements to Child Care Subsidy (www.education.gov.au/ChildCarePackage).

Families can identify which payments they may be entitled to receive, including the Child Care Subsidy, through the online Payment and Service Finder (www.centrelink.gov.au).

An individual's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy

For Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy to be paid for a session of care provided for a child, that child and their parent/s or carers (the 'individual') must meet certain eligibility requirements.

Age requirements for the child

Children must:

- be aged 13 years or under
- not attend high school (secondary school).

Providers can provide care for children who do not meet these conditions but should be aware that Child Care Subsidy (or Additional Child Care Subsidy) will not be payable.

However, some older children with disability and children attending secondary school at a young age may be eligible on a case-by-case basis if they have a legitimate need to access subsidised care and cannot be left unsupervised:

- children aged 13 and under who are attending secondary school, including children with disability
- children with disability aged 14 to 15 years, and
- children with disability aged 16, 17 or 18 years in exceptional circumstances.

Centrelink will consider the parent's eligibility in respect of these children based on information and evidence provided by the parent at claim or when updating their circumstances.

Immunisation requirements for the child

To be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy a child must also meet immunisation requirements.

The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families, as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against harmful and often deadly diseases. To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up vaccination schedule, or have an approved exemption from the immunisation requirements.

There is a short immunisation grace period, which provides some flexibility for families to meet the vaccination requirements where they may have missed or forgotten a scheduled vaccination.

Residency requirements for the parent (individual/claimant)

To receive Child Care Subsidy, the claimant or their partner must be Australian residents as defined under the *Social Security Act 1991*, or be eligible non-residents.

Information for families

For more information about the immunisation and residency requirements for Child Care Subsidy, a family should contact Centrelink (www.humanservices.gov.au).

Types of child care and sessions of care covered by Child Care Subsidy

For an individual to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, the child care must be delivered in Australia by an approved child care provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.

An individual will not be eligible for Child Care Subsidy in relation to care that is provided to a child in any of the following ways:

- aboard a transportation vehicle (such as a bus), unless the transport is merely incidental to a session of care being provided (such as to take children on an outing), or

- in a domestic living arrangement on residential premises which is the child's own home; or when the child's parent or other primary carer stays with the child while the care is taking place, except for care provided by an In Home Care service, or
- by an individual who does not hold a required working with children card/check (or equivalent) or where the card/check has been issued but the Department of Education and Training has not been notified of the card details, or
- while the child is attending school or engaged in a formal schooling program (including a home schooling or distance education program) during any part of the session of care.

Amount of Child Care Subsidy payments (entitlement)

Entitlements — overview

The amount of subsidy to which a family is entitled is determined by the:

- family income
- results of an activity test
- types of eligible child care services.

There are caps on the hourly rate for which a subsidy will be paid, and in some cases on the total subsidy that will be paid in each financial year.

Withholding of payments will continue, as it reduces the likelihood of debt for individuals. An amount of five per cent of Child Care Subsidy entitlements is withheld from payment.

In exceptional circumstances, a determination can be made that a family should receive more hours of support than the standard entitlement.

It is important that families keep Centrelink informed about any change of family circumstances.

Family income

Family income is the adjusted taxable income of the individual and their partner (if they have a partner) and is used to determine the percentage of subsidy to which an individual is entitled.

To calculate the entitlements and payments for each child, the individual will need to provide a reasonable estimate of their adjusted taxable income directly to Centrelink. These details will be used along with the information submitted by the provider in their session reports, for the calculation.

The percentage of subsidy relative to income level is set out in Table 7, effective from July 2018.

The lowest income threshold will be indexed by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually, and all other income thresholds will be increased by the same dollar amount to match the rate at which the subsidy gradually decreases.

Table 7: *Current levels of family income and the amount of Child Care Subsidy payable as a percentage of the actual fee charged or hourly rate cap, effective from 2 July 2018*

Family income	Subsidy per cent of the actual fee charged or hourly rate cap, whichever is lower
Up to \$66,958	85 per cent
More than \$66,958 to below \$171,958	Decreasing to 50 per cent*
\$171,958 to below \$251,248	50 per cent
\$251,248 to below \$341,248	Decreasing to 20 per cent*
\$341,248 to below \$351,248	20 per cent
\$351,248 or more	0 per cent

* Subsidy gradually decreases by 1 per cent for each \$3000 of family income.

Activity test

The hours of subsidised child care per fortnight that a family is entitled to is determined by an activity test. Depending on the combined hours of work, training, study, recognised voluntary work or other recognised activity undertaken, a family can receive up to 100 hours of subsidy per fortnight per child. Both the claimant, and their partner if they have one, must satisfy the activity test unless there is an exemption. For claimants who are partnered, the number of subsidised hours the family is entitled to will be based on the member of the couple with the lowest activity test result, even when an exemption applies.

The family or individual will provide activity details directly to Centrelink. These details will be used, along with the information submitted by the provider in their session reports, and the family's income, to calculate the entitlements and payments for each child.

Table 8: *Hours of activity and maximum number of hours of Child Care Subsidy (per fortnight) per child*

Hours of activity (per fortnight)	Maximum number of hours of subsidy (per fortnight) per child
For families earning up to \$66,958	
Less than 8 hours	24 hours
For families earning up to \$351,248	
8-16 hours	36 hours
More than 16 up to 48 hours	72 hours
More than 48 hours	100 hours

A broad range of activities meet the activity test requirements, including paid work, being self-employed, carrying out unpaid work in a family business, looking for work, and recognised volunteering or studying. There are exemptions to the activity test for parents who legitimately cannot meet the activity requirements.

Low-income families on combined family incomes of \$66,958 or less a year who do not meet the activity test can access 24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight under the Child Care Safety Net.

Families who do not meet the activity test, but have a preschool aged child attending preschool in a Centre Based Day Care service, will be exempt from the activity test and eligible for 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight.

Families who need more than 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight can apply to Centrelink for additional hours.

Information for families

For more details about how the activity test is applied, including activities that can meet the activity test, and exemptions, see (link - www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/how-your-activity-level-affects-child-care-subsidy)

Caps and withholding

Hourly rate caps

Hourly rate caps are the upper limit on the amount the Australian Government will subsidise approved child care. They vary across service types to reflect differences in operating costs and average fees charged.

Combined with the family's Child Care Subsidy percentage, the rate caps will be used to calculate the amount of subsidy per hour each family is entitled to receive:

- where a provider charges less than the hourly cap, families will receive their applicable percentage of the actual fee charged
- where a provider charges more than the hourly cap, families will receive their applicable percentage of the hourly rate cap.

The family's out-of-pocket expenses will be the difference between the subsidy to which they are entitled (based on their income and activity levels) and the total fees charged by the provider. The caps will be indexed annually by the Department of Education and Training in line with the Consumer Price Index and published on the Department's website.

The Government does not set child care fees — providers set their fees and parents pay the gap between the subsidy and the actual fee. However, the hourly rate caps serve as a guide to providers and families about what a 'high fee' might be.

The hourly rate caps are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Hourly rate caps payable for children below school age and of school age, according to the type of child care service provided, effective from 2 July 2018

Service type	Hourly rate cap (children below school age)	Hourly rate cap (school aged children)
Centre Based Day Care	\$11.77	\$10.29
Outside School Hours Care	\$11.77	\$10.29
Family Day Care	\$10.90	\$10.90
In Home Care	\$25.48 (per family)	\$25.48 (per family)

An individual is only eligible for child care fee assistance where a service imposes a liability on an individual by charging a real commercial fee for that care. A liability to pay that fee must already have been incurred irrespective of whether any subsidy is subsequently provided by the Government to reduce that liability.

Annual subsidy cap

Families with an adjusted taxable income of \$186,958 or less have no annual cap on the subsidy they can receive. For families with income of more than \$186,958 to less than \$351,248, the annual subsidy cap is \$10,190 per child, per year (indexed by CPI annually). Families with income of \$351,248 or more cannot receive Child Care Subsidy.

Families can monitor their progress towards the annual subsidy cap through their Centrelink account.

The provider will be notified by the Department of Human Services through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point if a family whose child is enrolled at a service has reached their annual subsidy cap. There will be no fee reduction amounts paid to the service in respect of that child from that time forward (for the remainder of the financial year) and they will have to pay the full fee agreed in the Complying Written Arrangement.

Withholding of payments

The amount that a provider will be paid, and that the individual will receive in the form of fee reductions, will be five per cent less than the individual's Child Care Subsidy entitlement.

Withholding some of a family's entitlement to Child Care Subsidy before it is paid to child care providers is a way to reduce the likelihood of families incurring a debt at the end of a financial year. The process of withholding does not reduce a family's overall entitlement to Child Care Subsidy and is similar to the process of withholding some of a family's Child Care Rebate if they also received any Child Care Benefit under the previous child care arrangements.

Some parents may have their withholding percentage varied from the default amount of five per cent. Providers will be able to see the amount withheld on the payment advice they receive each fortnight.

There is no withholding of Additional Child Care Subsidy payments.

Family circumstances

Exceptional circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, variations may be made to eligibility requirements, such as residency requirements, or to other conditions of Child Care Subsidy. These will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Families who are in, or have children in, circumstances that may be exceptional should contact Centrelink.

Change of family circumstances

The provider will receive notification of each individual's entitlement information once the individual has confirmed their enrolment notice. This information is viewable through the provider's third-party software or the Provider Entry Point. This information will include details of each individual's:

- Child Care Subsidy percentage
- number of subsidised hours per fortnight (the family's activity test result)
- apportioned hours (where the child attends more than one service and the individual has chosen to apportion a certain number of their subsidised hours to each service)
- Additional Child Care Subsidy percentage (if applicable)
- whether the family has reached the Child Care Subsidy annual subsidy cap
- a count of the number of absences the child has used in the current financial year.

When a family's circumstances change and this affects their eligibility and/or entitlement, they are required to notify Centrelink of the change as soon as possible. The provider will be able to see any change to the family's entitlement through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

Changes to a family's entitlement will generally take place from the beginning of the next Child Care Subsidy fortnight after the change occurred. Where a parent is late in reporting a change in their circumstances resulting in an overpayment of Child Care Subsidy for previous sessions of care, a debt may be raised. Parents will be notified through their Centrelink online account where debts are raised by Centrelink due to changes in their entitlement, for example, if their activity test result changes.

Where a parent is unsure about the details of a debt raised by Centrelink, they will need to log into their Centrelink online account for further details, or raise their questions with Centrelink.

Providers should encourage families to keep their details updated with Centrelink to help them reduce the risk of debt throughout the year and at reconciliation.

Grandparent carers

Grandparent principal carers not on income support may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy. These grandparents will be entitled to 100 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight irrespective of their activity, with the rate of subsidy based on their, or any partner's, income.

Grandparents who are not principal carers of their grandchildren, but have regular or shared care of the child, may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, based on their income and hours of recognised activity.

If those grandparents do not meet the Child Care Subsidy activity test and earn less than \$66,958, they will be able to access 24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight at 85 per cent of the hourly rate cap.

Grandparent principal carers who are on income support will be supported through Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent).

Legislation references — Child Care Subsidy

Legislation/Instrument	Main references
<i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i>	Part 4A — Child Care Subsidy Schedule 2 — Amounts of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Schedule 3 — Adjusted taxable income
<i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i>	Part 3A — Payment of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy
Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017	Part 2 — Eligibility for Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Division 1 — Circumstances where no one is eligible for a session of care Part 3 — Amount of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy
Child Care Subsidy Minister's Amendment Rules (No. 1) 2018	Division 1A — Prescribed classes of children for eligibility for Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy
Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017	Part 2 — Payment of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Part 4 — Provider requirements Division 1 — Complying Written Arrangements

5. Additional Child Care Subsidy





5. Additional Child Care Subsidy

Additional Child Care Subsidy provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality child care on a child's health, wellbeing and development, and the importance of continuity of care.

There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:

1. Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) — to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect
2. Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) — to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren
3. Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) — to help families experiencing financial hardship
4. Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) — to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.

Each of these is described in more detail in the following sections.

The Child Care Subsidy eligibility requirements for an individual also apply to Additional Child Care Subsidy

The provider's role in Additional Child Care Subsidy

Providers are centrally involved in identifying children who require extra support through Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing).

Providers are not involved in making applications for the other types of Additional Child Care Subsidy, although they may wish to help families who they think may be eligible by encouraging them to contact Centrelink and apply for additional assistance. Providers will be advised of individuals using their service who are receiving these other payments. An overview of these types of Additional Child Care Subsidy is provided for providers' information, and to allow them to support families who may be eligible.

Additional Child Care Subsidy levels and rates

A provider must not charge an individual who is eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy a higher fee than they would ordinarily charge for an individual who is eligible for Child Care Subsidy.

Table 10: Availability of different types of Additional Child Care Subsidy, with subsidy levels and relationship to income and activity

Extra support	Additional subsidy	Relationship to income or activity
Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)	A subsidy equal to 100 per cent of the actual fee charged, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, for up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight.	Irrespective of the family's income or their level of activity.
Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent)	A subsidy equal to 100 per cent of the actual fee charged, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, for up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight.	Irrespective of the family's income or their level of activity. However, an individual or their partner must be in receipt of an income support payment.
Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)	A subsidy equal to 100 per cent of the actual fee charged, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight. Limited to 13 weeks per event.	Irrespective of the family's income or their level of activity.
Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work)	A subsidy equal to 95 per cent of the actual fee charged (up to 95 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap).	The hours of subsidised care are determined by the activity test. Income must be below \$66,958.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing), Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) are each subject to time limits, outlined in the following detailed sections.

The hourly rate for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing), (grandparent) and (temporary financial hardship) is designed to target support to those families that are genuinely in need, and ensure that cost is not a barrier to commencing or continuing with child care.

For example, the maximum Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap for Centre Based Day Care is \$11.77. Families will be able to access a subsidy of up to 120 per cent of this rate cap or \$14.12 per hour if the actual fee charged by the service is over the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap rate.

The rate is expected to cover the fees of most services. In exceptional circumstances, an individual might receive a higher level of Additional Child Care Subsidy and/or increased hours of assistance. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Individuals who may be eligible for more than one type of Additional Child Care Subsidy

An individual who may be eligible for more than one type of Additional Child Care Subsidy will only receive one type of Additional Child Care Subsidy at a time. The order in which the types of Additional Child Care Subsidy will be applied is:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing), then
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent), then
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship), then
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work).

Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

The ACCS (child wellbeing) Guidance for Approved Providers provides more detail on the administration of this subsidy.

Eligibility

Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) provides additional child care fee assistance to an individual (or provider) in respect of children at risk of serious abuse or neglect. It helps to address cost barriers families may experience, so that children can either enter or remain engaged with child care.

For the purposes of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing), a child is taken to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect if the child is at risk of experiencing harm, as a result of current or past circumstances or events that resulted in the child being subject to, or exposed to, any of the following:

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

The Minister's Rule sets out in detail the circumstances when a child is taken to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect for the purposes of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing).

The definition of 'at risk' includes situations where the child is likely to experience those circumstances in the future (for example, the future risk is 'real and apparent'). This allows families to be eligible for the subsidy at the appropriate earliest point and potentially before they are known to a child protection agency.

Any child who is identified as being 'at risk' under state or territory child protection law will meet the definition of 'at risk' and the individual (or provider) will therefore be eligible to receive the payment.

Enrolling children 'at risk' when no eligible individual can be identified

In certain cases, a provider may identify a child at risk of neglect or abuse who meets relevant criteria but may be unable to identify a parent or carer — an individual or claimant — who is eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing). In these cases, as a last resort, the provider may enrol the child under an 'Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) — provider eligible arrangement'. This arrangement will end once the child is no longer at risk.

In this situation, the provider effectively becomes the individual in relation to that child, although a different arrangement will apply to the enrolment.

Limits on when a provider can give an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) certificate for a child

When 50 per cent or more of the children cared for by a service on any one day are receiving Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing), a provider cannot give any additional certificates. The 50 per cent includes children:

- for whom the provider has issued a certificate or certificates for an initial six-week period
- where the Department of Human Services has approved one or more longer periods of Additional Child Care Subsidy.

If a service is approaching the 50 per cent threshold, the provider will receive notifications through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point, so it can monitor the situation. If a service reaches the 50 per cent threshold, the provider will no longer be able to give certificates for children at risk. However, it will still be able to apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) by seeking approval (a determination) from the Department of Human Services.

Under certain circumstances, the Department of Education and Training can change the percentage limit that applies to a particular service. Providers who believe there is a case for this for one of their services should apply through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

Parental involvement — discussing child wellbeing with families

Providers who identify a child who may be at risk should have an open and transparent conversation with the family. The provider may want to let them know that:

- there are concerns about the child and the family, and that the provider or service wants to help
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) does not necessarily involve a child protection agency. However, if the child's circumstances meet the state or territory legislative requirements for reporting (including mandatory reporting) the provider must comply with those requirements
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) is available to help children in difficult and stressful situations, and their families, through increased subsidy for six weeks and possibly longer (up to 100 hours and up to 120 per cent of the rate cap)
- the provider can initially certify Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) for up to six weeks, providing immediate practical support, and that the provider can make application for the subsidy to continue after that if required
- providers who certify Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) must share information about the circumstances with an appropriate state or territory body, and the organisation may contact the family to help them.

If a provider does not feel they can have a conversation with the parents or carers, they could ask a relevant organisation for guidance. In some cases, providers may need to consider if mandatory reporting (including mandatory reporting) is required.

How to access Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

There are two ways to access Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing):

- A. Giving an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) certificate
- B. Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) determination.

These are described in more detail in the following sections.

A. Giving an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) certificate

If the provider identifies that a child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect, it may give a certificate that allows payment of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) for an initial period of up to six weeks. This will automatically trigger payment of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing).

Initial application — providing a certificate

A provider can give a certificate for up to six weeks based on its observations and assessment of the child's circumstances. No other evidence is required at this stage.

The provider must notify the appropriate state/territory body within the first six weeks of giving a certificate. If, however, the child has been referred to the child care service by an appropriate body, further notice is not required.

The certificate is given through the provider's third-party software or the Provider Entry Point, and requires:

- details of the child
- confirmation that the child's circumstances meet those outlined in the Minister's Rules
- a high-level description of the type of risk
- the period of time (up to six weeks) that a certificate is given for
- details of the state or territory body which has been given notice about the welfare of the child (this information can also be entered at a later stage — for more details, see below)
- a declaration that the information is true and correct.

A certificate commences on a Monday and is given for periods of full weeks. It can be backdated for up to 28 days but cannot commence later than the day it is given. It can be given for up to six weeks, or for a shorter period of time if the provider believes that circumstances will change in a way that the child will no longer be at risk.

A certificate can only be given for a particular child in a particular service. If a child is enrolled in multiple services from the same provider, a certificate will need to be given for each service.

If the child has previously been given one or more Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) certificates for a total of six weeks in a 12-month period, a provider cannot give another certificate, and will need to apply for a determination instead.

Although third-party evidence does not need to be provided when a certificate is given, supporting documentation (such as staff observations) must be kept to substantiate the claim that the child is at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Department of Human Services can review a certificate. If the view is formed that the child for which the certificate was given is or was not at risk, the certificate may be varied or cancelled. Both providers and families will be told if this happens.

Canceling or replacing a certificate

A certificate can be cancelled when the child the certificate was given for is no longer or never was at risk. This could be the case where a certificate was accidentally given for the wrong child; or where new information has come to light that the child's circumstances do not require an 'at risk' certification. Where a certificate was accidentally given for a period where the child was not at risk, a replacement certificate can be given with the correct dates.

Once the time for varying session reports has passed for the first week a certificate was in effect, the certificate can no longer be cancelled using third-party software or the Provider Entry Point. Instead, the provider must advise the Department of Human Services that a child is no longer at risk and that the certificate should be cancelled. The Department will then consider the circumstances and where appropriate, cancel the certificate. Both the provider and family will be notified of the decision.

B. Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) determination

If the provider believes the child will continue to be at risk, it can apply to the Department of Human Services for a determination to continue the subsidy for up to an additional 13 weeks. Third-party evidence is required to support an application for a determination.

Applications for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) are made through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

Applying for an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) determination (to extend payment beyond an initial six weeks)

If observations suggest that the child will still be at risk beyond the initial six-week period, the provider can apply to the Department of Human Services for a determination to continue the subsidy for up to an additional 13 weeks, through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

Evidence to support a determination is required for an application for an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) determination.

An application for a determination can be made before the certificate expires. To ensure continuity of payments it may be beneficial to apply early.

The Department of Human Services can make a determination for up to 13 weeks at a time, commencing on a Monday and in full weeks only. Once made, a determination covers all providers and services that the child attends, no matter who the individual is that is caring for the child.

Once a determination has been made, no application is needed for further periods — the provider will receive a notification four weeks before each determination expires, which asks whether the child's circumstances have changed or remain the same. The purpose of the notification is to remind the provider that the determination is getting close to expiry and encourage them to review the child's circumstances. If the child continues to be at risk, this provides reasonable notice to advise the Department of Human Services that this is the case and consider what further evidence might be provided.

If the child remains at risk and Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) should be extended, the provider should respond as such. The Department will consider the circumstances, including any evidence provided, and if appropriate make a new determination.

If the provider does not respond to the notification before the existing determination expires, payment of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) will cease.

For as long as a child remains eligible for Child Care Subsidy, there is no limit on how long Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) can be provided for a child who remains at risk of serious abuse or neglect. However, if a provider considers that a child is no longer at risk, it must notify the Department of Human Services using their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point. The Department will then decide whether to vary or cancel the determination. This decision will be communicated to the provider that applied for the original determination, and to the family.

Evidence to support a determination

Evidence should show that the child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect and specify the type of abuse where applicable. Where possible, evidence should indicate how long the child is likely to be at risk. Evidence should not be older than six months.

New evidence does not necessarily need to be provided for each period of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing). Evidence should not be older than six months, which means, one piece of evidence could cover two determinations of 13 weeks each.

Evidence may include a:

- letter from the state/territory body which was notified during the six-week period
- letter and case plan from a relevant professional (see the next section)
- court order that indicates the child is at risk (this alone is sufficient evidence)
- written statement from a child protection agency that a case of abuse or neglect has been substantiated (this alone is sufficient evidence).

Generally, the evidence must allow the assessing officer to determine if the child meets the definition of 'at risk of serious abuse or neglect' in the relevant Minister's Rule.

In all other cases, the evidence provided must give a high-level description of the circumstance that resulted in the child being at risk. Evidence provided must:

- focus on the presence of risk of serious abuse or neglect (or evidence of actual abuse or neglect), for example, by referencing indicators of abuse or neglect or risk factors
- describe the child's circumstances in a way that they can be clearly linked to the definition of 'at risk of serious abuse or neglect'
- explain the link between the circumstances of the parent/caregiver and the risk to the child (where applicable)
- highlight how the family's issues are a barrier to the family caring appropriately for the child/children thereby leaving the child/children at risk (where applicable).

Agencies, organisations and professionals considered suitable to provide third-party evidence

Agencies and organisations considered suitable to provide third-party evidence in support of an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application are:

- state and territory government prevention, early intervention and support programs and services for vulnerable children and families in place across states and territories
- non-government organisations providing early intervention and family support services
- state and territory government child protection agencies
- other state and territory government and non-government organisations that are providers of relevant services including those related to mental health, family violence and family law, homelessness, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and Indigenous services.

Professionals considered suitable to provide third-party evidence in support of an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application include:

- medical practitioners and registered nurses
- hospital admission / emergency unit professionals
- welfare agency personnel and social workers
- psychologists and counsellors
- physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech pathologists
- dentists and pharmacists
- school principals and teachers
- police officers.

It is assumed that the families will have known these professionals for sufficient time to allow the professionals to make an assessment that the child is 'at risk'.

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other appropriate professionals who may be able to independently verify the concerns or observations and provide supporting documentation.

What if the provider cannot obtain evidence in time to apply for an extension (determination)?

Sometimes it is difficult to obtain third-party evidence in a timely manner. If a provider has been unable to gather third-party evidence during the initial six weeks to support the application for the first determination, it may submit a statutory declaration outlining its concerns about the child and attempts to obtain third-party support.

Generally, it is expected that four months (six-week period of certification plus first 13-week block) will be sufficient time to obtain suitable third-party evidence.

Providing notice to an appropriate state or territory body

The provider must notify the appropriate state or territory body within the first six weeks of giving a certificate. Once the appropriate body is aware of the child's circumstances, it can decide what assistance it might provide to the family.

Once a state or territory body has been notified, the provider does not need to 'provide notice' again for as long as certificate/s and determinations remain continuously in place and the child remains at risk. However, if there is a gap between certificates and/or determinations, the provider must provide notice again before applying for a new determination.

If the child has been referred to the child care service by an appropriate body, the provider is not required to provide notice.

Generally, organisations can be considered appropriate state or territory bodies if they:

- are a state or territory department or agency
- are funded or part-funded by the state or territory
- are otherwise supported or endorsed by the state or territory
- fulfil a role that would otherwise be taken by the state or territory.

Appropriate organisations that meet these criteria could include:

- parenting assistance including Family Support Programs
- interpersonal conflict, separation, or mediation services
- child and maternal health services, including ante-natal services
- drug or alcohol or substance abuse services or gambling services
- community health services including:
 - publicly funded general practitioner services (but not private services)
 - mental health services
 - counselling services
 - women's health services
 - bereavement counselling services (psychology or social work)
 - psychiatric services, or
 - palliative care services
- domestic violence, rape victim support or other similar support services (including state or territory police)
- homelessness, crisis or public housing services
- financial counselling services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and support services
- school readiness programs, school counsellors and other education related 'secondary services'
- other early intervention services
- a child protection agency.

Each state and territory has different arrangements for assisting families and children at risk, so the process for providing notice varies. The ACCS (child wellbeing) Guidance for Approved Providers, provides more detail on how to make these referrals in each state and territory.

Providing notice to an appropriate state or territory body does not over-ride or remove a provider's obligation to formally notify of mandatory reporting cases through the relevant child protection agency. Providers need to distinguish between circumstances that need to be formally reported and those that do not, in accordance with the relevant state or territory legislation.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent)

Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) provides ongoing increased child care fee assistance to grandparents on income support who are the principal carers of their grandchildren.

A grandparent or a great-grandparent includes a natural, adoptive or step grandparent (or great-grandparent) of the grandchild, or the grandparent's (or great-grandparent's) current or former partner.

Information for families

Grandparent carers need to apply directly to Centrelink for Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent).

Providers are not directly involved in the application process but may wish to encourage families whose circumstances may make them eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) to enquire with Centrelink.

Providers will be notified if the Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) payment is approved for a child enrolled in their service.

Eligible grandparents will receive a subsidy equal to the actual fee charged by the child care service, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap for up to 100 hours per fortnight. These grandparents will not have to meet activity test requirements.

To be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent), an individual must:

- meet the eligibility requirements for Child Care Subsidy
- be the grandparent or great-grandparent of the child or children
- be the principal carer of their grandchild or grandchildren, providing all or at least 65 per cent of ongoing daily care and have substantial autonomy for day-to-day decisions about the child's care, welfare and development (the grandparent does not have to have formal guardianship of the child)
- receive a social security pension from the Department of Human Services or a service pension or income support supplement from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), including any of the following:
 - Age Pension
 - Austudy
 - Bereavement Allowance
 - Carer Payment
 - Disability Support Pension
 - Disability Support Pension (blind)
 - DVA Income Support Supplement or Service Pension
 - Mature Age Allowance
 - Mature Age Partner Allowance
 - Newstart Allowance

- Parenting Payment
- Partner Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Special Needs Pension
- Widow Allowance
- Widow B Pension
- Wife Pension, or
- Youth Allowance.

Grandparents will be required to provide evidence of their grandparent relationship and principal care arrangements, such as:

- a child protection order made under the state/territory care and protection laws
- a parenting order or consent order made under the *Family Law Act 1975*
- birth and marriage certificates to prove relationship
- third-party evidence such as a letter from child's school, general practitioner or other third-party (who has regular interactions with the family and can independently verify the circumstances) that supports the principal care arrangements
- a statutory declaration confirming the relationship or principal care arrangements, where they cannot obtain third-party evidence.

Grandparent carers may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy if they are either:

- principal carers not on income support, or
- not principal carers of their grandchildren but have regular or shared care of the child (that is, they care for them between 14 per cent and 64 per cent of the time).

Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)

Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) is designed to provide short-term support to families who are experiencing significant financial stress due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control. This will help ensure continuity of care for the child and ensure that families are provided with support when they need it most.

To be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship), an individual must:

- be eligible for Child Care Subsidy
- be assessed as experiencing temporary financial hardship, for circumstances that occurred no more than six months before the application is made
- have had a substantial reduction in their ability to pay child care fees as a direct result of the temporary financial hardship circumstance.

Eligible families will receive a subsidy equal to the actual fee charged, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, for up to 100 hours per fortnight. The eligible individual (or their partner) will not have to meet activity test requirements. This support will be provided for a maximum of 13 weeks per event.

An individual is taken to be experiencing temporary financial hardship if they have had a substantial reduction in their ability to pay child care fees due to any of the following:

- the death of a partner or child of the individual
- a loss of employment of the individual, or a partner of the individual, other than due to resignation or retirement
- a loss of income or business failure of the individual, or a partner of the individual, due to circumstances outside the control of the individual or the partner (such as serious illness)
- a loss of income of the individual, due to the death of a former partner, where the former partner was providing ongoing financial assistance in relation to the child under child support arrangements
- the individual, or a partner of the individual, being adversely affected by a major disaster event
- the destruction of, or severe damage to, the home of the individual, or of a partner of the individual
- the individual having to leave home, and not being able to return because of an extreme circumstance, or
- the individual still living at home after being subjected to domestic violence by a family member who has left or has been removed from the home.

Individuals will need to provide evidence to demonstrate there is a link between the circumstances they are experiencing and the financial hardship (including evidence of a substantial reduction in their ability to pay child care fees). Evidence will also need to show that the circumstance or event occurred within six months from the date the application was made.

In some cases, more than one of these circumstances may affect a family at the same time, increasing and compounding the hardship that that family is facing. Individuals can nominate one or more circumstances that have led to their situation of temporary financial hardship.

Information for families

Where a family shares information with a provider about difficult circumstances that are impacting on their ability to pay fees, which may fall into the circumstances listed above, the provider can encourage the family to contact Centrelink.

The provider is not directly involved in the application process but will be notified if Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) is approved for a child enrolled in their service.

Centrelink may also be able to provide advice on other support and assistance based on the family's circumstances.

The evidence required to support an application may include but is not limited to:

- independent documentation such as a letter from an employer (for loss of job), or from an independent professional
- a statutory declaration from the individual outlining the nature of the temporary hardship event
- a natural disaster event that has been formally declared and where the families concerned would be eligible for disaster assistance
- medical or death certificates.

The evidence provided will need to demonstrate that the individual has had a substantial reduction in their ability to pay child care fees as a result.

An application for this type of Additional Child Care Subsidy is made by the family directly to Centrelink through their Centrelink online account. Centrelink will assess the application and advise the provider if Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) is to be paid.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work)

Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) will provide support to families who are transitioning to work from income support by engaging in work, study or training activities.

The transition to work payment provides a subsidy of 95 per cent of the actual fee charged up to 95 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap. Hours of assistance will be determined by the Child Care Subsidy activity test. Individuals may continue to receive the subsidy for 12 weeks after they gain employment and their income support payments reduce to zero.

To be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) an individual must:

- be eligible for Child Care Subsidy
- be in receipt of an eligible income support payment including any of the following:
 - ABSTUDY (means tested)
 - Austudy
 - Carer Payment
 - Disability Support Pension
 - Farm Household Allowance
 - Newstart Allowance
 - Parenting Payment
 - Special Benefit (not residentially qualified), or
 - Youth Allowance
- have a family income lower than the Child Care Subsidy lower income threshold
- have a Job Plan in effect
- meet the Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) activity requirements
- not have exceeded the time limit for which Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) can be paid for their activity.

Recognised activities that may be supported under the Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) include:

- an approved course of education or study

- actively looking for work, paid work
- actively setting up a business
- unpaid work, including a work experience placement or an internship
- vocational training or other program which has a reasonable likelihood of improving an individual's employment prospects.

Families need to apply directly to Centrelink, through their Centrelink online account, to be assessed for Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work).

Information for families

Providers who believe a family using their service may meet these criteria should advise them to apply directly to Centrelink for Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work). The provider is not directly involved in the application process but will be notified if Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) is approved for a child enrolled in their service.

Centrelink may also be able to provide advice on other support and assistance based on the family's circumstances.

Legislation references — Additional Child Care Subsidy

Legislation/Instrument	Main references
<i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i>	Part 4A — Child Care Subsidy Division 2 — Eligibility for Child Care Subsidy Division 3 — Eligibility for Additional Child Care Subsidy Division 4 — Eligibility in substitution for an individual who has died Division 5 — Limitations on eligibility for Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Division 6 — Amount of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Schedule 2 — Amounts of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Part 2 — Amount of ACCS (child wellbeing), ACCS (temporary financial hardship) or ACCS (grandparent) for an individual Part 3 — Amount of ACCS (transition to work) Part 4 — Amount of Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) for an approved provider Part 5 — Activity test

<p><i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i></p>	<p>Part 3A — Payment of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Division 3 — Determinations Subdivision B — Determinations for individuals claiming CCS by fee reduction— 67CD(3) — Entitlement to be paid ACCS (child wellbeing) or ACCS (temporary financial hardship) Subdivision D — Determinations of approved providers Part 8A — Provider requirements and other matters Division 3 — 202C — Requirement to keep records in relation to certification for ACCS (child wellbeing) Division 5 — 204K — Notice to State/Territory body of child at risk of serious abuse or neglect</p>
<p>Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017</p>	<p>Part 2 — Eligibility for Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care subsidy Part 3—Amount of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy</p>
<p>Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017</p>	<p>Part 2 — Payment of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Part 4 — Provider Requirements Division 1 — Complying written arrangements</p>

6. Payments



6. Payments

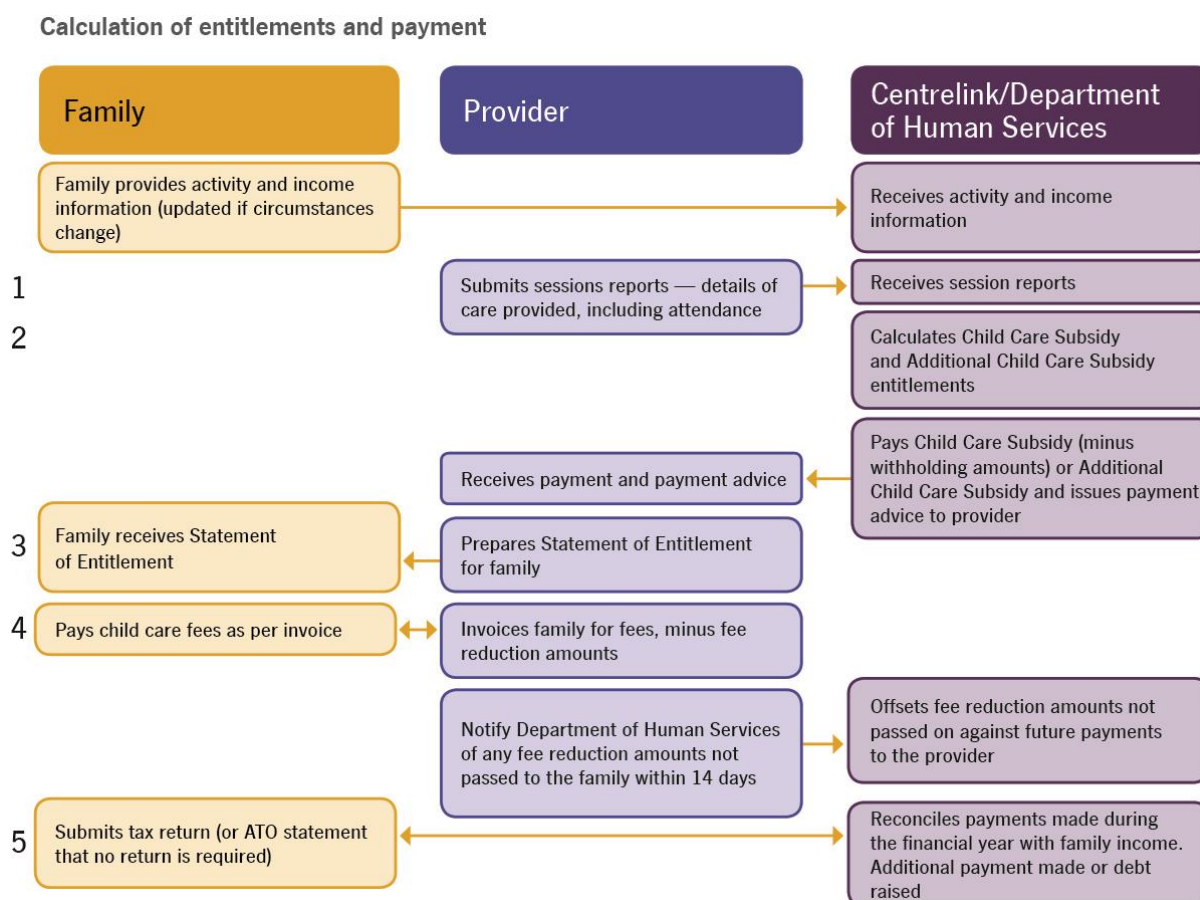
The payment process

There are five main steps in the calculation and payment of subsidies and fees:

1. Session reports are submitted by the provider
2. Calculation of entitlements and payments
3. Statements of Entitlement are issued to families by providers
4. Providers invoice families
5. Reconciliation.

The process is outlined in the diagram below, and each step (1–5) is described in more detail in the following sections.

Figure 3: Summary of the five main steps in the calculation and payment of subsidies and fees for child care



1. Session reports are submitted by the provider

Sessions of care

A 'session of care' is the minimum period of time that a provider charges a fee for providing child care. Sessions of care should be flexible enough to cater to the needs of families.

A session of care can be any length of time up to 12 hours, but cannot exceed 12 hours. Where care exceeds 12 hours, this must be submitted as two or more sessions of care.

A session of care cannot generally be reported during a time when the service is not open and available to provide child care (except where the service is closed due to a public holiday or local emergency).

Reporting sessions of care

Sessions of care are reported through a provider's third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

A session report must be submitted for each week a session of care has been provided to a child (including absences). Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy cannot be paid until a session report is received.

Some absences are allowable without affecting payment of Child Care Subsidy. If a child does not attend the session of care, or part of the session of care, the service is still taken to have provided the session and Child Care Subsidy can still be paid, as long as the absence is allowable. An absence is allowable if the care was booked and an individual was liable to pay for that care. A child can have up to 42 allowable absences in a financial year, but more may be allowable in particular circumstances (such as due to illness).

In Home Care is subsidised per family, up to a maximum of five children in one session of care. Session reports must be provided for all children in an In Home Care session of care. However, the fee charged by the service for the session of care is reported against one nominated child and a \$0 rate must be reported against any other children who received care in that session. The nominated child can be any of the children in the session of care eligible for the Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy. If more than the maximum number of children per educator require In Home Care, a second In Home Care educator can provide care as an additional session of care with an additional nominated child.

Session reports must be accurate. If the Department of Human Services has concerns about the accuracy of session reports, it can stop processing payments until the information has been verified.

When are session reports submitted?

Session reports must be submitted within 14 days after the end of the week when care was provided, except where:

- A provider or service was not yet approved, or was suspended, on the day the child's enrolment started. The session report must be provided within seven days after the end of the week in which the approval was provided or the suspension was revoked
- A provider has received business continuity payments because it is unable to provide session reports (such as because its system access is down). Session reports must be submitted within 14 days after it becomes able to submit reports again.

What must a session report contain?

Session reports need to be provided for each child for each week and need to include the details summarised in Table 11.

Table 11: Issues addressed and details of information required in the weekly session report

Issue	Details
Type of report	Can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> initial report, or variation (change) to a report, or withdrawal of a report.
Dates	Start and end dates of the week the report covers.
Session details	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> date session start and finish times attendance start and finish times (from 14 January 2018).
Absences	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> notification of absences (if applicable) reasons for additional absence/s (where child has used more than 42 absence days in a financial year).
Actual fee charged	The actual fee charged must reflect the amount the parent was liable to pay for the session of care. Where the parent directly benefits from another subsidy or discount that reduces their fee liability in relation to the session (that the provider knows of), the amount in this field must reflect the remaining amount after the other subsidy or discount has been applied. Likewise, if the parent is not liable to pay the whole fee charged for the session (because a third party has accepted liability to pay some of the fee), this field must only reflect the portion that the parent is liable for.
Other subsidies paid to the provider to reduce the individual's fee liability	Where the actual fee charged for the session was reduced by the amount of another subsidy that the parent directly benefitted from (for example employer contribution to parent's child care fees): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> notification of other subsidies – yes/no name of other subsidy payer other subsidy amount – hourly or session amount.
Family Day Care and In Home Care	Educator – Child Care Personnel ID.
Preschool	Whether the session was part of an early education program.

A session report must:

- contain at least one session of care for a week, recorded as either attendance or an absence
- only include sessions of care for which an individual incurred a genuine fee liability.

From 14 January 2019 (the first full Child Care Subsidy fortnight in 2019) session reports are required to record actual attendance in and out times (except for absences). Those providers already using an electronic solution for sign-in sign-out purposes should commence providing this information in session reports from July 2018.

Varying session reports

If the provider realises a session report was incorrect or did not need to be submitted (for example, because no care was provided to a child in that week), it can vary or withdraw a session report up until 28 days after the start of the week to which the report relates (or until the end of the financial year, if that occurs sooner).

If a provider needs to withdraw or change a session report after the 28-day limit, it will need to provide a reason for the late change or withdrawal for assessment by the Department of Education and Training.

What if the provider cannot submit session reports? — Business continuity payments

Business continuity payments may only be made if a situation arises that is beyond the control of the approved provider and prevents an approved service from submitting session reports that enable the calculation and payment of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy. These payments are an emergency measure only, and do not replace the requirement to submit session reports.

Examples of situations where business continuity payments may apply include (but are not limited to):

- a disruption to the operation of communication infrastructure the service uses that cannot be rectified by the end of the relevant period, or
- where the service is significantly affected by a natural disaster, such as flood, storm, fire or earthquake.

Business continuity payments are intended to allow a service to continue operating until electronic reports can be provided. Payments made in this way should still be passed on to parents as fee reductions. Then, once the provider is able to provide reports again, any business continuity payments will be offset against Child Care Subsidy payments (including those that are calculated for a past period in respect to which any business continuity payments were made).

The amount to be paid will be based on the average weekly amount paid to the service during a similar previous period (for example, similar number of children, similar time of year), known as a 'test period'. The amount of the weekly payment will be rounded to the nearest \$100.

If the service is new and there is no payment history to establish a 'test period', the amount will be 50 per cent of 50 hours of care for the estimated number of children in care for the week, at the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap for the service type.

If a provider is in a situation where it cannot submit session reports for reasons outside its control, it should contact the Department of Education and Training Child Care Help Desk (ccmshelpdesk@education.gov.au) to ask whether business continuity payments may apply.

Absences

Initial 42 days absence

Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy are payable for up to 42 absence days for a child in a financial year, in relation to sessions of care where an individual still incurs a genuine fee liability to pay for the care. A reason does not need to be provided for a child's initial 42 days of absence.

Additional absence days

Once 42 absence days have occurred in a financial year, Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy can only be paid for any additional absences where they are taken for a reason defined in the Family Assistance Law. These reasons can include any of the following:

- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill
- the child is attending preschool
- alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day
- the child has not been immunised against a particular infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child
- the absence is because the child is spending time with a person other than the individual who is their usual carer as required by a court order or a parenting plan
- the service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency
- the child cannot attend because of a local emergency (for example, because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterwards
- the individual who cares for the child has decided the child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

In shared care arrangements (where separated parents both claim Child Care Subsidy for the child's care), the allocation of 42 absences relates to the child, not to each individual claimant.

Reporting absences when a service is closed


If a service is closed for any reason other than a public holiday or a local emergency (as determined by the Department of Education and Training state or territory office), the provider cannot report children as absent from care.

For example, if a service is closed for renovations on the premises or administrative reasons and the provider advises families that care is unavailable on that day, the provider cannot report children as absent and claim Child Care Subsidy for enrolled sessions of care.

A child who has not yet received care or who has ceased receiving care

Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for absences where a provider charges a family to reserve a place for a child who has not yet physically started care.

If a child is booked in to start at a service on a particular date, and does not start on that day, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid until the child physically attends a session of care.



Similarly, a child care service is taken to have permanently ceased providing care for a child on the day the child last physically attends a session of care. This means that Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for absences submitted after a child last physically attends a session of care.

If a family has confirmed their child's last day at a service, but that child does not attend their last booked session of care, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any days after the child's last physical attendance at the service.

If a provider continues to charge fees for sessions on days after a child has left the service because the family did not give the agreed period of notice, Child Care Subsidy will not be payable for these sessions of care. If absences are reported in the above circumstances and Child Care Subsidy is incorrectly paid, these amounts will be recovered from the service.

Long absences

If a long absence is anticipated, the plans for this, and how it will be managed, can be specified in the Complying Written Arrangement. However, where a child does not attend a service within a period of eight weeks or more, the enrolment will be taken to have ended. Even where an absence longer than eight weeks is planned in the Complying Written Arrangement, a new enrolment notice will need to be submitted when care recommences after the absence. If a long absence is planned, the family may prefer to end the enrolment and submit a new notice when physical attendance recommences, so that the child's initial 42 day absences are not used up.

2. Calculation of entitlements and payments

The Department of Human Services calculates entitlements for Child Care Subsidy by using information provided by:

- the provider (such as in session reports)
- the individual who is claiming Child Care Subsidy for their child (their activity, income and other circumstances).

Information from other sources may also be used when relevant.

There are thresholds and caps for Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.

To receive Child Care Subsidy payments on behalf of families for a given week, the provider must have current provider and service approvals, and have submitted an enrolment and a session report for the eligible children.

Payments are made directly into the provider's nominated bank account, and providers will receive a payment advice with details of decisions about (determinations of) entitlements, calculations and payments.

Withholding of payments

Five per cent of Child Care Subsidy is usually withheld by the Department of Human Services, to reduce the likelihood that individuals will incur a debt. This means that the full subsidy amount, minus five per cent, is paid to providers on behalf of families following submission of session reports. Providers will be able to see the amount withheld on the payment advice they receive each fortnight. The amount withheld will be part of the gap fee that needs to be paid by parents.

There is no withholding of Additional Child Care Subsidy payments.

After the end of each financial year, when the individual (and their partner) settles their tax affairs (usually by submitting their tax return) the total entitlements and payments for each child will be reconciled against the individual's (and any partner's) actual income and activity for the year. If a parent received more than they were entitled to, the withholding amount will be used to offset the overpayment, so they do not have a debt (or have a smaller debt) to repay. Where parents received the correct amount of Child Care Subsidy, or received less subsidy than they were entitled to, amounts withheld during the year will be paid directly to them as a lump sum. This process of reviewing and recalculating entitlements for the full year is called reconciliation.

How will the provider know what payments are received for each child?

When a session report has been processed and a determination of entitlement made, the provider will receive a notification of the payment. This payment advice will be sent at the same time as the payment is dispatched, and will indicate:

- calculation and determination of entitlement
- offsets (amounts taken as payment towards a debt owed) and withholding amounts
- total payments to be made to the provider
- any payments being made direct to the individual.

Providers can also view the entitlements that have been calculated for each child through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point at any time.

When will payments be made?

Providers can submit session reports at any time, using their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point. Receipt of each report will be acknowledged.

Payment will be processed at 9am each Monday morning for sessions of care that occurred in the previous week and which have been reported before 9pm on the Sunday evening. More than one report may be made during the week — reported sessions will be accrued for processing on Monday morning.

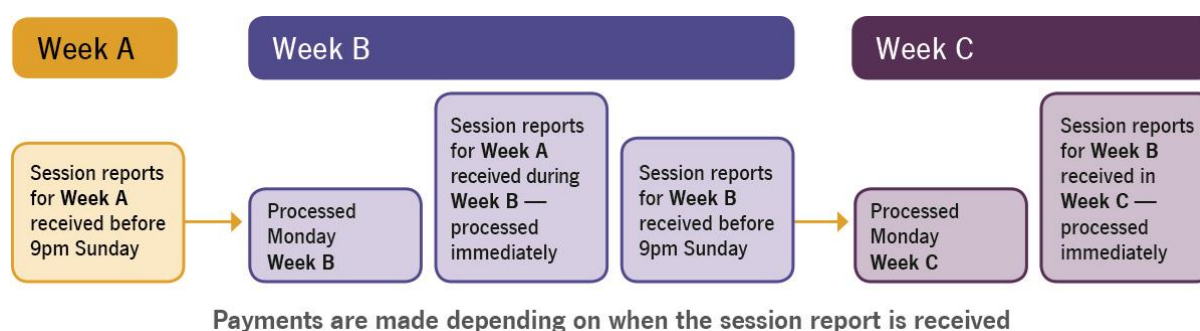
A session of care should only be reported once. For example, a report could be submitted on Wednesday evening for sessions of care that occurred on Monday through to Wednesday and a subsequent report submitted on Friday for sessions of care that occurred on Thursday and Friday.

Session reports submitted after 9pm on the Sunday will be processed and paid as they are submitted (but after the Monday morning weekly processing has been completed).

Table 12: When will payments be made

Session report received	Payment processed
Before 9pm on Sunday, for care provided in the previous week	The following Monday morning.
After 9pm on Sunday, for care provided in the previous week	Upon receipt.

Figure 4: How payments are made in relation to the timing of the session reports



Once a session report has been processed, the determination of entitlement will be available through the provider's third-party software or the Provider Entry Point and the payment advice will be issued.

Payments will be made to the provider's nominated bank account.

3. Statements of Entitlement are issued to families by providers

Providers must provide a Statement of Entitlement to parents of children eligible for Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy enrolled in their service(s), once every fortnight. This statement must include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts. The provider will need to use information about entitlements and payments for each child received in their payment advice (through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point) to prepare these statements.

Statements of Entitlement can only be issued for care already provided, as they must include details of the child's physical attendance at the service and actual fee reduction amounts. Statements of Entitlement cannot be issued in advance, based on estimates.

What a Statement of Entitlement must include

A Statement of Entitlement must include the details summarised in the table below.

Table 13: Categories and details of information required in a Statement of Entitlement

About	Details
The statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> name of the individual to whom the statement is issued name of the child to whom any sessions of care were provided unique identifier assigned to the enrolment of the child for care by the service date of issue and start and end dates of the statement period.
The service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> name of the provider any business name of the service registered with the Australian Securities

	<p>and Investments Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABN (if any) of the provider and (if different) the ABN under which the service trades • unique identifier of service and the provider. <p>For a Family Day Care or In Home Care provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name and unique identifier of each educator who provided care during the statement period which sessions of care the educator provided.
Sessions of care	<p>Daily and weekly totals of the number of hours of care provided during the statement period, including start and end times for each session of care.</p> <p>From 14 January 2019, the statement will be required to include the start and end times of the child's physical attendance.</p> <p>For the statement period and cumulatively for the financial year until the date of issue of the statement – the sum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of days on which the service is taken to have provided a session of care to the child while the child was absent (up to 42 days in the financial year) • the number of days on which the service is taken to have provided a session of care to the child, beyond 42 cumulative days in the financial year and particular circumstances apply.
Fees	<p>Hourly fee for each session of care provided in the statement period.</p> <p>Daily and weekly totals of the amount of all fees charged by the provider for care provided during the statement period, including details about any discounting or refund applied in order to pass on fee reductions.</p>
Fee reduction amounts	<p>For the statement period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of hours for which the fees were reduced (or for which the individual otherwise received the benefit of a fee reduction amount) • the total of the fee reduction amounts of which the provider was given notice • a breakdown of the amounts of fee reduction for each session of care and whether it related to a payment of Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy.

From 14 January 2019 (the first full Child Care Subsidy fortnight in 2019) session reports are required to record actual attendance in and out times (except for absences). Those providers already using an electronic solution for sign-in sign-out purposes should commence providing this information in statements of entitlement from July 2018.

What other information will parents receive about their entitlements?

In addition to the fortnightly Statement of Entitlement from providers, parents (individuals) will have access to information through their Centrelink online account, and will receive periodic notifications:

- parents can view their determination of entitlement (the outcome, decisions and calculations of entitlement) at any time, using their Centrelink online account
- parents will receive a notice of all determinations of entitlement during each quarter from Centrelink.

4. Providers invoice families

An individual (or their partner) who is entitled to receive Child Care Subsidy is required to pay a co-contribution to the cost of child care. The subsidy entitlement is always a percentage of the actual fees for care provided, and the provider is obliged to both:

- pass on the Child Care Subsidy amounts paid, generally as a fee reduction, and
- ensure that the individual pays their co-contribution — the gap between the Child Care Subsidy paid and the actual fees charged.

This usually means the provider will invoice families for the fees that are incurred over and above the subsidy that is, the agreed child care fees minus fee reduction amounts (the Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy payments it receives on the family's behalf). Payments for Child Care Subsidy will have been adjusted by the Department of Human Services for withholding of payments of five per cent. Providers are required to pass the actual fee reduction amounts on to families within 14 days of receiving payment advice. If this does not occur, providers must return the fee reduction.

When and how to invoice families is a business decision for each provider to determine. The Department of Education and Training does not recommend invoicing families using estimates of fee reduction (before Child Care Subsidy has been paid). This is because the actual amount of Child Care Subsidy paid (if any) may vary for a range of reasons that providers will not always be aware of, and therefore not be able to account for, in any such estimate. Providers may instead consider either:

- invoicing families for full fees for care in advance for the first period of care, with fee reductions applied to subsequent invoices, or
- issuing families with a joint Statement of Entitlement and invoice (in arrears) for the difference between agreed fees and fee reduction amounts after the end of each fortnight.

Providers should consider that when children start attending care while a claim is being assessed, any subsidy payable for this period (claims can be backdated up to 28 days) will generally be paid to the individual, not to the provider.

Parents can use the Payment and Service Finder to estimate their possible entitlement to Child Care Subsidy. However, actual fee reduction amounts cannot be confirmed except through the payment advice that will be provided by the Department of Human Services once session reports have been submitted and entitlements calculated.

What should a provider do if it cannot pass the subsidy on to the family?

Returning a fee reduction

If it is not reasonably practical for a provider to pass on fee reductions it has received to the relevant individual, the provider must remit the amount immediately and, if this is not done, the unremitted amount will become a debt that is owed to the Commonwealth by the provider.

The Department of Human Services can then make a separate payment of the individual's entitlement directly to the individual.

5. Reconciliation

What is reconciliation?

Reconciliation is also referred to as 'income review'. For Child Care Subsidy purposes, individuals are required to 'meet reconciliation conditions' by either:

- lodging a tax return, or
- submitting an advice to the ATO that they are not required to lodge a tax return. These obligations also apply to any partner of a claimant.

After the end of each financial year, when the individual (and their partner) settles their tax affairs (usually by submitting their tax return) the total entitlements and payments for each child will be reconciled against the individual's (and any partner's) actual adjusted taxable income and activity for the year. After this review, any outstanding subsidy will be paid to the individual, or they will be advised of any debt that they have incurred.

Reconciliation occurs between the individual and Centrelink. Providers are not involved in this process. However, providers should be aware that Child Care Subsidy payments are affected if reconciliation does not occur.

How is the provider affected if a family does not complete its reconciliation?

The first deadline by which reconciliation conditions must be met by individuals is one year after the end of the financial year in which Child Care Subsidy / Additional Child Care Subsidy was paid — that is, 1 July of the following year. If the individual does not meet the reconciliation conditions by that deadline, further payments will be suspended until reconciliation occurs.

If an individual meets the reconciliation conditions after the first deadline but before the second deadline (see below), their Child Care Subsidy payments can resume only from that point.

The second deadline is the end of the second year after the financial year in which Child Care Subsidy / Additional Child Care Subsidy was paid and is subject to reconciliation. If reconciliation conditions have not been met by the second deadline, the individual will lose their eligibility for Child Care Subsidy.

Loss of eligibility for Child Care Subsidy also means that any Additional Child Care Subsidy will cease.

Overpayments and debts

A child care debt is typically any amount of child care assistance paid that is greater than the entitlement for a session of care. Debts can be offset automatically against payments made through the Child Care Subsidy System, and providers will be able to see any debts and offsets through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point and in their payment advice.

Where the debt is large a debt notice will be issued to the provider of a child care service, or to an individual. Child care debts are due to the Commonwealth.

How could a provider incur a debt?

Circumstances when a provider might incur a debt include when:

- a provider fails to pass on Child Care Subsidy payments to the individual, and does not remit them back to the Department of Human Services within the required timeframe
- a provider reports care that did not occur
- an individual is overpaid Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy due to a false or misleading statement of the provider or due to the provider's non-compliance with the Family Assistance Law
- a provider's approval or approved service is cancelled or suspended after it received payments during any period following the suspension or cancellation.

How will a provider know if it has incurred a debt?

A provider will be notified of any debts incurred by receipt of a letter and/or notification through their third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

How does a provider repay a debt?

Debts may be recovered by setting-off against future payments made to a provider.

Debts may also be recovered by one or more of the following means if necessary:

- payment of the debt in full
- payment via instalments by arrangement with the Department of Education and Training
- legal proceedings
- garnishee notice.

What will happen if a provider does not repay a debt?

If a provider is issued with a debt notice, and either fails to comply with its requirements or terminates a repayment arrangement, interest may be charged on any outstanding debt.

Interest may be charged from 28 days after the debt notice is issued.

If the debt is not repaid within a specified timeframe, legal proceedings may be taken to recover the debt.

What happens if a service closes with an outstanding debt?

If a provider closes during the debt recovery process, then a debt notice will be issued for any outstanding debt amount, which will still be pursued.

Review of decisions relating to debt

A provider can request an internal review of the decision relating to a debt. If a provider is not satisfied with the outcome of an internal review, it is entitled to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Legislation references — payments

Legislation/Instrument	Main references
<p><i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 (as amended)</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i></p>	Part 3A — Payment of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy
<p><i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i></p>	<p>Part 3A — Payment of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy</p> <p>Division 3 — Determinations (decisions for the Australian Government in relation to the entitlement of an individual to be paid Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy)</p> <p>Division 4 — Estimates etc. of adjusted taxable income Division 5 — Payments</p> <p>Part 4 — Overpayments and debt recovery</p> <p>Part 5 — Review of decision — Division 1A — Preliminary matters in relation to child care decisions (conditions relating to reconciliation and other reviews of decisions relating to entitlements)</p> <p>Part 8A — Division 2 — Requirements in relation to Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy by fee reduction</p> <p>Part 8A — Division 5 — Requirements in relation to information and reports Part 8A — Division 6 — Business continuity payments</p>
Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017	Part 6 — Business continuity payments
Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017	<p>Part 4 — Provider requirements</p> <p>Division 2 — Requirement to give individuals statements of entitlement</p>

7. Record keeping and notifications



7. Record keeping and notifications

To maintain approval, providers must keep certain records and notify the Department of Education and Training of certain events. Failure to keep these records and provide the required notifications can result in suspension or cancellation of provider or service approvals, or other penalties.

All providers must keep and maintain the following records:

- complaints made to the provider, or to any of the services of the provider, relating to compliance with the Family Assistance Law
- record of attendance for each child for whom care is provided (regardless of eligibility for Child Care Subsidy and/or Additional Child Care Subsidy, including records of any absences from care)
- statements or documents demonstrating that additional absence days in excess of the initial 42 absence days meet the criteria
- copies of invoices and receipts issued in relation to the payment of child care fees
- copies of all Statements of Entitlement issued and any statements issued to advise of a change of entitlement.

Providers must also keep a written record of the following, even if they would not otherwise record them in writing:

- any notice given to a state or territory body about a child at risk of abuse or neglect
- copies of the evidence and information provided with an application for approval about persons with management or control of a provider and persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service
- any evidence or information produced to obtain police checks and working with children checks for personnel and to support any statements about these checks in an application for provider or service approval.

Written records include records that are made and stored electronically, as long as they are stored safely and any changes, apart from incidental changes related to their storage and display, are also recorded.

Providers must keep written records of all required background checks for all specified personnel. Records must be kept for seven years.

Records that Family Day Care services must keep

Whether or not an individual is eligible, in respect of a child, for Child Care Subsidy, all Family Day Care services must keep appropriate records.

Keeping a register of care

Family Day Care services must keep a register of any care of own children or siblings excluded from Child Care Subsidy by a Family Day Care educator. The register must be updated within 14 days after the end of each week in which care was provided.

The register must set out:

- the name of the individual who would otherwise be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (for example, the parent or their partner)
- the name of the Family Day Care educator (whether this is the same individual) and their child care personnel identification number (ID)
- the relevant child and their customer registration number (CRN)
- the enrolment ID for the child
- the service ID
- whether the child is still eligible for Family Day Care because the child is an eligible disability or Inclusion Support Program child, or is a remote area child, or the educator is usually in paid work or formal study at the time care is usually provided.

Care at premises other than the home of the Family Day Care educator

Where a Family Day Care educator provides care at premises other than the educator's residence, a written record must be kept of the address and contact number of the premises.

Notifications providers must give about their service(s)

Providers must notify the Department Education and Training of any of the following changes to their service(s), within the timeframe specified. Penalties may apply if providers fail to make required notifications.

Providers must notify the Department at least 42 days before they stop operating a service.

All of these notifications can be made through third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.

Table 14: Matters that child care providers need to notify to the Department of Education and Training and the specified timeframes

Matters to be notified	Timeframe for notification
Fees The total hourly fee charged by the service for care for each approved child care service of the provider (before any fee reduction amounts or other rebates or discounts), as set out in any policy or advertising information provided to individuals who enrol their children with the service. Any change to the fee information.	Within 14 days of any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• commencement of the service, or• notice of approval of the service, or• any change.
Operating hours The hours and days on which each approved child care service of the provider operates, with opening and closing times notified in 24-hour format. Any change to the operating hours.	Within 14 days of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• commencement of the service, or• notice of approval of the service; or• any change.

<p>The number of anticipated vacancies that the provider has available to fill in respect of each of its approved child care services in relation to each day of the following week (beginning on a Monday).</p> <p>A vacancy is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for a Centre Based Day Care service or a Family Day Care service — an ongoing full day vacancy • for an Outside School Hours Care service — an ongoing full session vacancy. 	By 8pm each Friday.
<p>Ceasing to operate an approved child care service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to avoid being in breach of a law of the Commonwealth, a state or a territory, or • due to circumstances beyond the provider's control when 42 days' notice cannot be given. 	Within 24 hours after ceasing to operate the service.
<p>Change of physical or postal address of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provider, or • the premises from which any of the provider's approved child care services operate. 	No later than 30 days before the change, or, if the change was not foreseeable at that time, as soon as practicable.
<p>Change to the name of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provider, or • any of the provider's approved child care services including evidence of name change. 	Within 14 days after the change.
<p>Change of any of the following contact details of the provider, or of any of the provider's approved child care services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an email address • a website • a telephone number • a fax number. 	Within 14 days after the change.
<p>Information about any new person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with management or control of the provider (including any person who becomes responsible for the day-to-day operation of any of the provider's approved child care services), or • who becomes a Family Day Care educator or In Home Care educator in relation to any such service. <p>The information must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name and contact details of the new person • a declaration that the provider has undertaken all background checks required in relation to the new person, together with details of the new person's working with children card, if applicable. 	Within seven days after the new person becomes a person with management or control of the provider, or a Family Day Care educator.
<p>Change of the name of or contact details for any of the following persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person with management or control of the provider (including any person who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of any of the provider's approved child care services) • a Family Day Care educator or In Home Care educator in relation to any such service. 	Within seven days after the provider becomes aware of the change.
<p>The provider becomes aware, because of a background check undertaken in relation to a specified person, that the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a serious conviction or finding of guilt for any of the following offences under a law of Australia or of a foreign country: 	Within seven days after the provider receives a record of the check.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an indictable offence punishable by a maximum of two years imprisonment or 40 penalty units, or – an offence involving violence, or a sexual offence, or – an offence involving fraud, stealing or dishonesty, or • is an undischarged bankrupt, or • was a director or secretary of a corporation when the corporation went into administration, receivership or liquidation, or at any time during the 12 months beforehand. 	
An event or circumstance in relation to a person with management or control of the provider (including a person responsible for the day-to-day operation of any of the provider's approved child care services) that reasonably indicates that the person is not likely to be a fit and proper person to be involved in the administration of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.	Within seven days after the provider becomes aware of the event or circumstance.
<p>A person stops having management or control of the provider (including when a person stops having day-to-day responsibility for the operation of any of the provider's approved child care services).</p> <p>The provider must also notify the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training of when, and the reason why, the person stopped having management or control of the provider.</p>	Within seven days after the person stops having management or control of the provider.
<p>An educator obtains a qualification in respect of providing child care from a registered training organisation and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provider or person with management or control has an interest in that registered training organisation, by virtue of which the provider or person owns, operates, controls or carries out the registered training organisation, and either • it reasonably appears that the educator has not obtained the qualification solely on her or his own merit, or • the qualification has otherwise been obtained in circumstances that might reasonably be perceived as demonstrating a conflict of interest. 	Within seven days after the provider becomes aware of the matter.
A provider or a person with management or control of the provider, obtains an interest, or is likely to obtain an interest, in a business which may affect their ability to comply with the Family Assistance Law, where the approval may benefit the business or where a conflict of interest might reasonably be perceived to exist.	Within seven days of the provider becoming aware of the matter.
<p>Change in the status of a working with children card for each individual who is required to have such a card under section 195D of the Family Assistance Administration Act 1999.</p> <p>For example, if the card is amended, suspended or revoked.</p>	Within 24 hours after the provider becomes aware of the change of status.
The provider enters into administration, receivership, liquidation or bankruptcy, and the details of this event.	Within 24 hours after the event.
Unexpected closure of any of the provider's approved child care services due to unforeseen circumstances.	Within 24 hours after the closure.
<p>A serious conviction or finding of guilt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person with management or control of the provider (including a person who becomes responsible for the day-to-day operation of any of the provider's approved child care services), or • a Family Day Care educator, In Home Care educator, or another educator, in relation to any such service. 	Within 24 hours after the provider becomes aware of the charging, conviction or finding of guilt.

Legislation references — record keeping and notifications

Legislation/Instrument	Main references
<i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> as amended by: <i>Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017</i>	Division 3 — Requirements in relation to records Section 204F — Requirement to notify Secretary of certain matters
Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017	Part 5 — Provider requirements
Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017	Part 4 — Provider requirements Division 3 — Requirement to make records Division 4 — Requirement to keep records

8. Support funding and programs



8. Support funding and programs

The Inclusion Support Program assists early learning and child care services to include children with additional needs.

The Community Child Care Fund supports child care services in disadvantaged communities, who need assistance to address barriers to families accessing and participating in early learning and care.

Inclusion Support Program

This program is designed to assist early learning and child care services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies, as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

It funds providers to build their ability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services, so these children can learn and develop alongside their peers.

Children with additional needs may include (but are not limited to):

- children with disability including those undergoing assessment for disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children from a refugee or humanitarian background
- children with serious medical condition/s
- children presenting with language and speech delays
- children presenting with disruptive behaviour.

Inclusion Agencies

The Inclusion Support Program is delivered across the country by seven Inclusion Agencies (one for each state and territory, except for NSW and the ACT which are serviced by a single Inclusion Agency). Agencies work with eligible early childhood and care services to help them to include children with additional needs.

Providers who believe they need extra assistance to include children with additional needs, should contact the Inclusion Agency for their state or territory.

The Inclusion Agency will help providers to identify the barriers that limit their service's ability to include children with additional needs, and develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan to address those barriers.

Working with the Inclusion Agencies, providers will complete a Strategic Inclusion Plan online through a web-based application called the Inclusion Support Portal. A paper-based option is available for services that do not have the IT infrastructure to access the Inclusion Support Portal.

Where additional resources are identified in a Strategic Inclusion Plan that cannot be accessed through the local community, the Inclusion Agency may refer the provider to the Specialist Equipment Library, or recommend that an application be made to the Inclusion Development Fund.

Specialist Equipment Library

Equipment available from the Specialist Equipment Library may include (but is not limited to):

- portable ramps to improve access
- standing frames and full support swings to allow a child with high physical needs to participate in activities
- hoists, slings, harnesses, change tables, toilet sets or steps, potty chairs, mobile stools and seating or posture aids for educators to assist them to lift and transfer children safely when carrying out basic care functions such as changing or going to the toilet
- specialised inclusion toys such as switch toys
- specialised furniture such as chairs, tables, desks and positioning equipment
- communication cards or charts, and Auslan dictionaries to enable the child and educators to communicate effectively.

A service's need for specialist equipment must be identified in a Strategic Inclusion Plan, or recommended by a relevant professional, such as an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, and endorsed by the Inclusion Agencies.

Inclusion Development Fund

This Fund provides funding to assist eligible services to address barrier/s to inclusion that cannot be resolved by support provided by an Inclusion Agency or the Specialist Equipment Library.

A national manager assesses, and where appropriate, approves Inclusion Development Fund applications for all streams of funding from eligible services. This ensures a nationally consistent and equitable application of the Inclusion Development Fund eligibility requirements which are outlined in the fund's guidelines.

There are four discrete streams of Inclusion Development Fund support, which have different eligibility criteria, application processes and approved funding purposes. The four streams of support are:

- Subsidy for an Additional Educator — per hour funding to centre based services to subsidise the employment of an Additional Educator, to increase the educator-to-child ratio to support the inclusion of a child (or children) with disability
- Subsidy for Immediate/Time-Limited Support — enables centre based services to immediately engage an additional educator for a time limited period, while an alternative and more stable solution is being determined
- Family Day Care Top-Up — supports eligible Family Day Care services to include children with disability with ongoing high support needs, by providing a fee top-up payment where including the child results in the educator being unable to enrol the maximum number of children usually allowed
- Innovative Solutions — funds innovative and flexible solutions to inclusion, where a barrier or barriers have been identified and cannot be addressed by the support provided by its Inclusion Agency.

Applications for the Inclusion Development Fund funding can be made at any time during the program to provide responsive support to services as they enrol children with additional needs. Applications will be considered on their merits. There are caps on Inclusion Development Fund funding, and the approval of any application is contingent on the availability of funding.



For guidelines and more information about the Inclusion Support Program, including how to contact Inclusion Agencies or the Inclusion Development Fund Manager, see www.education.gov.au/inclusion-support-programme-isp.

Community Child Care Fund

The Community Child Care Fund is designed to help eligible child care services address barriers to early learning and child care participation, particularly in disadvantaged communities, including Indigenous communities. There are various streams of funding, as follows.

Community Child Care Fund — open competitive program

Eligible providers can apply for grant funding to:

- make it easier for disadvantaged or vulnerable families and communities to access and use child care services
- support the sustainability of a service, if the provider is having trouble staying financially viable provide capital support (for buildings or equipment) to increase the supply of child care places in areas of high unmet demand.

Community Child Care Fund — restricted non-competitive program

This program is available to specified services only. Eligible service will be notified and invited to apply.

Eligible providers can apply for grant funding to:

- ensure continuity of child care services during and beyond any period of transition
- support eligible child care services to build capacity and operate sustainably under the new child care system
- support services to increase participation by Indigenous children.

For more information about the Community Child Care Fund, see www.education.gov.au/community-child-care-fund. Grant opportunities, including eligibility criteria, will be advertised on GrantConnect at www.grants.gov.au.

Connected Beginnings program

This program is designed to integrate early childhood, maternal and child health, and family support services with schools in a selected number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experiencing disadvantage. Providers will be notified if they are in an eligible community.

For more information about the guidelines for the Connected Beginnings program, see www.education.gov.au/connected-beginnings-program.



9. Services exempt from the National Law and Regulations



9. Services exempt from the National Law and Regulations

In Home Care

In Home Care is not covered by the National Law. In Home Care providers and services are therefore not required to meet requirements under the National Law.

Some states and territories have additional legislative requirements which cover In Home Care. In addition to the Family Assistance Law, In Home Care providers and services must also meet the legislative requirements of the states and territories in which they are located and where they provide services. Specifically, this includes:

- Tasmania: *Child Care Act 2001*
- South Australia: *Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011*.

Other exempt services

Certain services that were funded under the Budget Based Funded program prior to July 2018, and a small number of other specified services, are exempt from the National Law and Regulations for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy. These services are also exempt from Family Assistance Law requirements relating to the minimum operating periods for Centre Based Day Care and Outside School Hours Care, to allow for community circumstances. The following sections set out the alternative requirements for these services.

These services are required to meet the standards relating to safety, quality and insurances and are required to submit an annual Quality Improvement Plan, so that they gradually align their practice with the National Quality Framework.

Services must be able to provide evidence of compliance with the following additional conditions of continued approval. This may involve providing, on request, copies of certificates, qualifications, policies and processes that support the delivery of the service as described below.

If additional services are approved under these requirements, they will be listed by name in the Minister's Rules.

Commitment to high quality child care

The provider must be equipped to provide high quality child care at the service appropriate to the needs of families and the community having regard to the provider's ability and commitment to:

- provide a tailored, individual education program based on each child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests

- develop a program that acknowledges and strengthens the cultural identity of children to whom care is provided at the service
- ensure children are adequately supervised at all times
- ensure reasonable precautions are taken to protect children from harm or injury and any hazard likely to cause harm or injury
- ensure at least one staff member who holds a current approved first aid qualification is on duty and present at the service at all times that care is being provided by the service
- carry out any other activities the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training considers necessary or appropriate for the provision of high quality child care at the service.

Serious incidents

The provider must implement appropriate arrangements to manage serious incidents, including (without limitation) notifying the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training in writing within 24 hours after either:

- a serious incident occurs, or
- a circumstance occurs that could have resulted in the occurrence of a serious incident.

The following incidents are serious incidents:

- the death of a child while being cared for by the service or as a result of an incident that occurred while being cared for by the service
- any incident involving injury, harm, trauma to, or illness of, a child while being cared for by the service for which:
 - the attention of a medical practitioner was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought, or
 - the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital
- any incident for which the attendance of emergency services at premises where care is usually provided is sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought
- a child being cared for:
 - is missing, or
 - appears to have been taken or removed from the premises where the service provides the care in a manner that would contravene the Education and Care Services National Regulations, regardless of whether the regulations apply, or
 - is accidentally locked in or locked out of the premises where the care is being provided or any part of those premises.

Work, health and safety

The applicable Work, Health and Safety laws include:

- the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- any regulations or instruments made under that Act
- any corresponding Work, Health and Safety laws within the meaning of that Act.

The Department of Education and Training does not administer the Work, Health and Safety (WHS) laws, but these notifications are required so the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training can decide if there are any issues that may impact on the continued operation or approval of a service.

The provider must carry out the following duties as part of managing workplace health and safety in relation to the service:

- if the provider is required to report a notifiable incident to the Regulator, arising out of the provision of care by the service, under the WHS laws, the provider must also:
 - immediately, or as soon as possible afterwards, give written notice of the incident to the Secretary, together with a copy of any written notice given to the Regulator
 - give the Secretary, within 14 days after the incident occurred, a report detailing the circumstances of the incident, the results of investigations into its cause, and any recommendations or strategies for prevention in the future
- give the Secretary written notice with full details of the following:
 - any suspected contravention of the WHS laws relating to the provision of care by the service within 24 hours after becoming aware of the suspected contravention
 - any cessation or direction to cease work under the WHS laws relating to the service due to unsafe work, immediately, or as soon as possible, after the provider is informed of any such cessation or direction
 - any workplace entry under the WHS laws by a WHS Entry Permit Holder, or an Inspector, to any premises of the service where care is being provided, within 24 hours of becoming aware of any such workplace entry
 - any proceedings against the provider, or any decision or request by the Regulator given to the provider, under the WHS laws, within 24 hours of becoming aware of any such proceedings, decision or request
- provide the Secretary with copies of all notices and correspondence issued to the provider by any person under the WHS laws, within 24 hours after receiving any such notice or correspondence.

Insurance

The provider must, at all times, have in place the following insurance policies:

- workers' compensation insurance in relation to the service as required by law
- a current policy of insurance providing adequate cover for the service against public liability with a minimum cover of \$10,000,000.

Quality Improvement Plan

A provider is required to have, within six months after the approval of the service, a written Quality Improvement Plan that:

- is available to view by the Secretary on request
- assesses the service's strengths and weaknesses against each of the seven key quality areas of the National Quality Standard of the National Quality Framework.

Please note this requirement for Quality Improvement Plans is different to that in the National Regulations, which do not apply to these exempt services.

A provider is required to review the Quality Improvement Plan annually by reassessing the service's strengths and weaknesses against each of the seven key quality areas and indicating progress and areas for improvement.

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Further information

Contacts and further information

For providers

Other information and resources for providers on the Department of Education and Training website: www.education.gov.au/child-care-providers

Other information and resources for providers on the Department of Human Services website: www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/business/your-business-sector/child-care-service-providers

Child Care Subsidy System Helpdesk: operators are available from 9am-5.30pm AEST Monday to Friday.

Phone: 1300 667 276

Email: ccmshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

For families

Information and resources for families on the Department of Education and Training website: www.education.gov.au/families

Information and resources for families on the Department of Human Services website: www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/assistance-child-care-fees

Payment and Service Finder to estimate family entitlements: www.humanservices.gov.au/paymentfinder

MyChild: www.mychild.gov.au – for information about children’s services, including early learning and child care services, costs and vacancies

MyGov: www.my.gov.au - to create and then access a Centrelink online account, to make Child Care Subsidy claims and view the status of claims

National Quality Framework (including National Law and Regulations) and state and territory authorities: www.acecqa.gov.au

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au/contact-us

Phone: 1300 422 327

Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au

State and territory regulatory authorities: www.acecqa.gov.au/help

Complaints or concerns about child care practices

Phone: 1800 664 231

Email: tipoffline@education.gov.au.

The tip-off line can be used by parents, providers or their employees to raise concerns about practices relating to the administration of subsidies.

Concerns relating to the quality or safety of a service should be raised with the relevant state or territory authority (above) but if you are not sure where to raise your concern, the tip-off line can help.

Glossary



Glossary

Term	Definition
Absences	An occasion when a child is not physically present for a session of care that has been agreed under a Complying Written Arrangement. Up to 42 absence days in a financial year will be eligible for subsidised care without the need to provide reasons for the absence.
Activity test	An assessment of the combined hours of work, training, study, recognised voluntary work or other recognised activity undertaken by a family. The activity test is used to determine the number of hours of subsidised care to which a family will be entitled.
Additional absence day	An absence day that occurs after a child has been subsidised for 42 absence days in a financial year. Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy can only be paid for additional absences where they are taken for a reason defined in the Family Assistance Law.
Additional Child Care Subsidy	A payment that provides targeted additional fee assistance to families and children facing barriers in accessing affordable child care.
Adjusted taxable income	Adjusted taxable income is used to assess eligibility for some benefits and payments, including Child Care Subsidy. Adjusted taxable income may include taxable income, foreign income, investment losses, reportable fringe benefits and superannuation contributions. For the purpose of Child Care Subsidy, in the case of a family it is the adjusted taxable income of both individuals. See www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/adjusted-taxable-income .
Approved provider	A provider of early learning and child care that has been approved to administer Child Care Subsidy on behalf of the Australian Government.
Arrangement	An agreement between a child care provider and an individual or organisation, to provide child care in return for child care fees.
Australian Business Register	The register of businesses and organisations who have an Australian business number (ABN). See www.abr.business.gov.au .
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)	The national body established under the National Law to support states and territories to deliver best-practice regulation of early learning and child care and ensure national consistency in improving quality outcomes for children. See www.acecqa.gov.au .
Budget Based Funded Programme (BBF)	A program that supported child care services in locations where the market would not otherwise be viable. The program closed on 30 June 2018 and eligible services are now supported through other programs.
Centre Based Day Care	Child care that is provided in licensed or registered centres. It can include any pattern or arrangement of care provided in this setting.
Centrelink	The agency that delivers payments and services to individuals and families on behalf of the Australian Government. See www.humanservices.gov.au .
Centrelink online account	The account that an individual uses to access Centrelink online services. An individual can create and access a Centrelink online account through www.my.gov.au .
Change of family circumstances	An event that changes an individual's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy, or the amount of subsidy that they are entitled to be paid.
Child	The unique child who receives early learning and care.

Child at risk	A child at risk of serious neglect or abuse and who meets the relevant criteria.
Child Care Safety Net	<p>A scheme that provides targeted assistance to vulnerable and at-risk children and their families, as well as supporting child care services in disadvantaged communities to address barriers in accessing child care.</p> <p>The Safety Net has three components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Child Care Subsidy • Community Child Care Fund • Inclusion Support Program.
Child Care Subsidy System	The technical platform through which providers and families interact with government in relation to child care subsidies.
Claim	A family's application for financial assistance for child care from the Australian Government. The claim includes information about a family's circumstances, income and activity levels, that allow eligibility and entitlements for Child Care Subsidy to be assessed.
Claimant	A person (the individual), who is applying for or receiving Child Care Subsidy.
Community Child Care Fund	A fund designed to help eligible child care services address barriers to early learning and child care participation, particularly in disadvantaged communities, including Indigenous communities.
Complying Written Arrangement	An arrangement (an agreement between a child care provider and an individual, to provide child care in return for fees) that includes required information.
Customer Reference Number (CRN)	An individual reference number allocated by the Department of Human Services for each child and one for each parent or guardian who is claiming Child Care Subsidy.
Debt	If an individual or approved child care provider has been paid more than they were entitled to receive, the amount in excess of their entitlement is a debt to the Australian Government under the <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> and <i>Data Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act 1990</i> .
Department of Human Services (DHS)	The Australian Government department responsible for the development of service delivery policy and access to social, health and other payments and services. See www.humanservices.gov.au .
Educator	A person who provides care for someone else's child or children at a child care service, in their own home or, in the case of In Home Care, in the child's own home.
Enrolment	An enrolment occurs when the provider has entered into an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child, and the provider submits an 'enrolment notice' in the Child Care Subsidy system. It is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend child care (or have an arrangement for care) to have an enrolment notice regardless of their Child Care Subsidy eligibility status.
Enrolment notice	The notice given by a provider through the Child Care Subsidy System that they have entered into an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child.
Exceptional circumstances	Circumstances that affect a child or family that justify variations to Child Care Subsidy eligibility requirements, such as residency or immunisation, or other conditions of Child Care Subsidy. These are determined by the Australian Government on a case-by-case basis, in response to an application.
Family Assistance Law	The legal basis for the Australian Government to provide child care fee assistance, and for the approval of child care providers to administer child care fee assistance on behalf of families. The primary legislation is: <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999</i> and <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration)</i>

	<i>Act 1999.</i>
Family Day Care	A type of child care that is usually provided in the home of an educator.
Fee reduction amount	The Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy payments a provider receives on the behalf of an individual. Fee reduction amounts will be adjusted for withholding of five per cent where it applies (generally for Child Care Subsidy).
Financial hardship	Occurs when there is an unforeseeable event that substantially reduces a family's ability to pay for child care fees.
Fit and proper person	A person who is considered suitable to be involved in the administration of child care subsidies on behalf of the Australian Government and families, having regard to matters including their history of compliance with the law and responsible financial management.
Grandparent	Natural, adoptive or step grandparent (or great-grandparent) of the grandchild. Includes the grandparent's (or great-grandparent's) current or former partner.
Harm	Any detriment to a child's wellbeing.
Hourly rate cap	The maximum amount the Australian Government will subsidise for each hour of care. Hourly rate caps are different for different care types. They provide a guide to providers and families about what a 'high fee' might be.
In Home Care	A flexible form of early childhood education and care where an educator provides care in the child's home. It is restricted to families who are unable to access other forms of early childhood education.
Inclusion Agencies	Agencies contracted by the Australian Government to help Child Care Providers make their services more inclusive for children with particular needs, such as disability.
Inclusion Development Fund	Funding available to assist eligible child care services to address a barrier to inclusion that cannot be addressed through the support of an Inclusion Agency.
Inclusion Support Program	A program that assists early learning and child care services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies, as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.
Individual	The person who is liable to pay the child care service fees. The individual is often the child's parent (or the parent's partner) but may be another adult with legal responsibility for the child.
'Initial 42 days' absence	One of up to 42 days' absence for which Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy is payable for a child in a financial year, with no reason required to be given.
Lower income threshold	The family income threshold above which the Child Care Subsidy percentage first starts to decrease.
Minister's Rules	A legislative instrument that provides certain details about how the Family Assistance Law is implemented. See www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01464 .
MyGov	The website that provides a secure way for individuals and families to access government services, including their Centrelink online account, with one login and one password. See www.my.gov.au .
National Law and Regulations	Refers to the <i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</i> and the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</i> , which set a national standard for children's education and care across Australia. In effect, the same law is applied in each state and territory, but with some variation for the needs of each state or territory. References to the National Law includes the <i>Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012</i> . See www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations .
National Quality	A jointly governed uniform national approach to the regulation and quality

Framework	assessment of education and care services including: a national legislative framework that consists of the National Law and National Regulations; a National Quality Standard; and an assessment and rating system. See www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about .
Neglect	A failure to be provided with the basic needs that are essential for the child's physical and emotional wellbeing.
Nominated Child	For In Home Care only — one child in each session of care, against which an In Home Care service reports a session of care.
Non-standard hours	Hours of care in a child care service outside standard hours. Applicable only to Family Day Care and In Home Care services.
Notifications	Changes in the circumstances of an approved provider, which the provider is required to notify the Australian Government under the Family Assistance Law
Outside School Hours Care	Outside School Hours Care provides care before and after school hours and during school vacations for children who normally attend school.
Parenting/consent order	An order made by the Family Court when parents cannot decide matters concerning their children.
Payment advice	Notification issued to providers by the Department of Human Services, setting out the details of entitlements calculated and payments made for children enrolled in their service/s. Payment advice is issued through the provider's third-party software or the Provider Entry Point.
Provider	A person or business entity that is responsible for operating a child care service (or services).
Provider Digital Access (PRODA)	A system to authenticate an individual's digital identity, so that they may interact with various government digital and online systems without requiring identity verification for every interaction.
Provider Entry Point	Part of the secure Child Care Subsidy System, through which providers can apply for provider and service approval, and which subsequently enables them to access information, add or remove a service, make notice of a change in their circumstances, and give enrolment notices and session reports in relation to Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.
Provider ID	A provider's unique identity number in the Child Care Subsidy System.
Reconciliation	A process that happens when an individual submits their tax return (or a statement that no tax return is required) after the end of a financial year. The individual's actual income is determined, and Child Care Subsidy payments that should have been made are calculated and compared to the payments they received (based on estimates). After reconciliation, any outstanding subsidy will be paid to the individual or notification will be given of any debts incurred.
Regular care	Occurs when a child is in the individual's care for at least 14 per cent, but less than 35 per cent, of a care period, and would be a Family Tax Benefit child of the individual but for the child being in the individual's care for less than 35 per cent of the care period.
Regulatory authority	The state and territory authority responsible for the administration of the National Quality Framework within that jurisdiction.
Reimbursement fringe benefit	A reimbursement fringe benefit in respect of a session of care is the amount by which an individual or the individual's partner is reimbursed by a person in respect of the individual's or partner's liability to pay for the session of care, if the reimbursement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a fringe benefit within the meaning of the <i>Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986</i>; or • would be such a fringe benefit but for paragraph (g) of the definition of fringe benefit in subsection 136(1) of that Act.

Rural/remote locations	Non-metropolitan areas that are defined in the Australian Standard Geographic Classification as 'inner regional, 'outer regional, 'remote' or 'very remote'.
School aged child	<p>A child who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attends primary or secondary school, or • is on a break from school and will be returning to primary or secondary school after that break (for example, school holidays), or • has reached six years of age. <p>School aged children include children who attend the year before Year 1 of primary school.</p>
Secretary's Rules	A legislative instrument that provides certain details about how the Family Assistance Law is implemented. See www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01463 .
Service	The child care that is delivered by a provider in a particular site or setting. There are different types of child care services. One provider may deliver one or more services, which may include different service types and/or different service sites.
Session of care	The period of time that a provider is charging a fee for providing care to an enrolled child.
Shared care	When two or more people (often, but not always, separated parents) are responsible for the care of the child, and are both 'individuals' for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy. A person in shared care would care for the child between 36 and 66 per cent of the time.
Sibling	A brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, adoptive brother, adoptive sister, stepbrother or stepsister.
Statements of Entitlement	A fortnightly statement from a provider to a family giving details of sessions of care provided, the child's attendance and resulting fee reduction amounts.
The Secretary	The Secretary of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.
Third-party software	Software developed and provided by commercial providers to interact with the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy System and to support administration and management activities for child care services.
Vacancy	<p>A vacancy is an unfilled and available place in a child care service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for a Centre Based Day Care service or a Family Day Care service — an ongoing full day vacancy • for an Outside School Hours Care service — an ongoing full session vacancy.
Working with children checks	A process to screen a person's criminal records and any reports about professional conduct that may affect their suitability to work with children. This is one of a number of safeguards to provide safe environments for children. The name of the check and the process may be different in different states and territories.