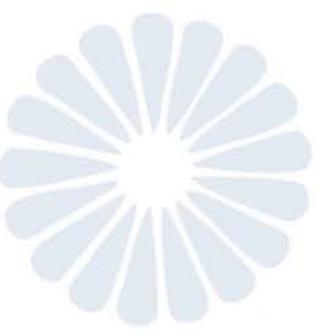


information for families using child care

Information sourced from
www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood



A
collection of
fact sheets for 2011-2012
that aims to assist families to
access the support and services
required to make important, and
sometimes complex, child care
decisions.

The fact sheets include information on
Child Care Benefit, the *Child Care
Rebate*, *Jobs, Education and
Training (JET)* Child Care fee
assistance, Child Care Services
Support program; and Child
Care Access
Hotline.



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Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 1

What assistance does the Australian Government give me for the cost of my child care?

The Australian Government understands that high quality child care is important for many Australian families. High quality child care plays an important role in improving children's educational and developmental outcomes. Child care also enables parents to participate in the workforce and the broader community. To help you with the cost of your child care, the Australian Government provides the following assistance.

Child Care Benefit

Child Care Benefit reduces the cost of your total child care fees. It is available to you if you are a parent, foster parent or grandparent with a child in your care who is attending child care approved by, or registered with, the Government. There are certain eligibility requirements you must meet to get Child Care Benefit.

Child Care Rebate

The Child Care Rebate is additional assistance if you use approved child care, and you are working, studying or training at some time during the week or have an exemption. The Child Care Rebate covers 50 per cent of your out-of-pocket costs up to the annual cap. From 1 July 2010 the Child Care Rebate annual cap will be \$7,500 per child per year, subject to the passage of legislation.

From July 2011 you have the option to receive your Child Care Rebate paid fortnightly, either directly to your bank account, or through your child care service provider as a fee reduction. You still have the option of having your Child Care Rebate paid quarterly or annually as a lump sum directly to your bank account.

Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Child Care fee assistance

JET Child Care fee assistance provides extra help if you are a parent on an income support payment and looking for work, studying or starting a job. It will cover most of your child care costs. Eligibility for JET Child Care fee assistance increased from 12 months of study, regardless of the course duration, to up to 24 months.

Child Care Services Support Program

The Child Care Services Support Program provides funding to support child care and related services.

- **Quality**—Promote quality care for all children in Australian child care services.
- **Community Support**—for programs designed to support access to child care for families in identified areas of need.
- **Inclusion Support**—helps child care services to build their capacity to include children with additional needs.
- **Professional Support**—provides child care workers with access to advice, training and resources to assist them build their skills and capacity to provide quality care.

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au
Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au
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13 12 02 if you need information in a language other than English.



▶ Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 2

What is Child Care Benefit (CCB)?

What is CCB?

CCB is a payment from the Australian Government that helps you with the cost of your child care.

Who can get CCB?

You can get CCB if you are a parent, relationship parent, foster parent or grandparent with a child in your care who is attending child care approved by, or registered with, the Government. You must meet certain requirements to get CCB (see also work, training, study test later in this fact sheet).

From 1 July 2009, Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office recognises all couples, opposite-sex and same-sex.

How much CCB can I get?

The amount of CCB you get depends on:

- your income
- the type of care you use (approved or registered)
- the amount of care you use
- the reason you are using care
- the number of children you have in care.

What is approved or registered care?

Approved care

These are services approved by the Government to provide child care because they meet certain high quality standards and operating requirements. They include:

- Long Day Care
- Family Day Care
- Outside School Hours Care (including before and after school and during school holidays)
- Occasional Care
- In Home Care.

You can choose to allow an approved child care provider to receive CCB on your behalf from the Government, which means you pay less in fees out of your own pocket.

Registered care

This is child care provided by grandparents or other relatives, friends or nannies for work-related child care. It can also include care provided by individuals in private pre-schools and kindergartens as well as some outside school hours care and occasional care.

You can receive the registered care rate for CCB and your carer must be registered with the Family Assistance Office. The CCB is paid by the Government into your bank or credit union account after you submit a claim. It is important to note that you cannot get the Child Care Rebate for registered care.

What eligibility requirements do I have to meet to get CCB?

To get CCB, you need to meet these requirements:

1. Residency

You or your partner must be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident living in Australia or be exempted from the Government's residency requirements.

2. Immunisation

Children under seven must meet the Government's immunisation requirements or have an exemption.

3. Responsibility for child care payments

To get CCB you must be the one responsible for your child care costs. If your employer contributes to your child care through salary sacrificing or packaging, you should discuss with them who is responsible for the child care costs. If another agency or individual pays your child care on your behalf you should discuss with them who is responsible for the child care costs.

What is the work, training, study test?

This test determines how many hours of CCB you can get.

- For registered care you and your partner must be working, training or studying or have an exemption from this test to get up to 50 hours of CCB per child per week. No minimum number of hours is required.
- For approved care all families can get up to 24 hours of CCB per child per week. To get up to 50 hours you and your partner need to be working, training or studying for at least 15 hours per week (or 30 hours per fortnight) or have an exemption from this test.

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



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Useful resources

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Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 3

What is approved child care?

Parents want the very best for their children. When placing your child in care you need to be confident you have chosen a safe, nurturing environment of high quality.

Approved child care is a good option.

What is approved child Care?

It is child care approved by the Australian Government because it meets certain standards and requirements. This includes having a license to operate, qualified and trained staff, being open certain hours, and meeting health, safety and other quality standards.

Can I get Child Care Benefit (CCB) if I use approved care?

CCB is a payment from the Government that helps with the cost of your child care. If you are eligible and you meet the income test, you can receive CCB for approved child care. You need to claim CCB so that you can also receive your Child Care Rebate.

Can I get the Child Care Rebate (CCR) if I use approved care?

You may also be able to get the CCR if you have used approved care, are eligible for CCB (at the zero rate or more) and met the work, training, study test (for the purpose of the rebate).

Please note that there is no income test for the CCR. If you are eligible for CCB, but your CCB entitlement is zero due to income, you may still be eligible for the CCR.

What types of approved care are there?

There are several types and some families use more than one:

- Long Day Care
- Family Day Care
- Outside School Hours Care (before and after school and vacation)
- Occasional Care
- In Home Care

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office:



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▶ Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 4

What are the different types of approved child care?

There are several types of approved child care and some families use more than one. Here is a description of each.

Long Day Care

This is provided in day care centres mainly for children up to school age. These centres may also call themselves kindergarten, preschools, child care centres, or early learning centres. They offer fun learning and development in bright, colourful surroundings with lots of toys and play equipment.

It can be all-day or part-time and is provided by private operators, employers, local councils, community organisations, or non-profit organisations.

Family Day Care

This is provided in an approved carer's home, for your children. It stimulates learning and development through arts and crafts, stories, outdoor activities, and games.

The hours of care are flexible and can be matched to your needs. Family Day Care can be all-day, part-time, casual, before and/or after school, and during school holidays.

Outside School Hours Care (before and after school and vacation)

This is provided in places like schools and community halls, mainly for primary school children. It offers supervised activities for different ages, including games, crafts, sport, reading, and music.

Outside School Hours Care is available before and/or after school and during school holidays. It can also be provided on pupil-free days during the school term.

Occasional Care

This is provided in small day care centres for your children. 'Family grouping' is encouraged so siblings are not separated. It stimulates learning and development through activities based on your child's needs and interests.

Occasional Care is flexible and available regularly or as you need it (for example, if you need to attend a doctor's appointment or need time out).

In Home Care

This is care provided by an approved carer in your home, for your children. It offers supervised activities for different ages, including arts and crafts, outdoor activities, and games.

You can use In Home Care if you cannot access an existing child care service or a service that meets your needs - for example, if you live in a rural or regional area, work shifts or non-standard hours, have a child with a disability or who is ill, or if you or your partner are caring for three or more children (including the child) who have not yet commenced school.

How can I get more information?

For further information about approved care in your area please visit mychild.gov.au.

For further information on the different types of approved care and reported vacancies please contact the Australian Government Child Care Access Hotline:



Call 1800 670 305 (a service is also available if you require information in a language other than English).

If you need to, you can also call:

Teletypewriter (TTY) 1800 639 327 (if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment).

You need a TTY phone to use this service.



▶ Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 5

What is registered child care?

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is a payment from the Australian Government to reduce child care fees for families using either approved or registered child care. Working families using registered care are entitled to CCB.

What is registered child care?

It is child care provided by grandparents or other relatives, friends or nannies who are registered as carers with the Australian Government's Family Assistance Office.

You and your partner need to be working or looking for work, training, or studying to get registered care. There are some exemptions.

Can anyone else provide registered child care?

Yes. It may also be provided by individuals in:

- preschools
- kindergartens
- some outside school hours care services
- some occasional care centres.

Carers or teachers in these services must be registered with the Family Assistance Office. All registered carers must comply with any relevant state or territory child care laws.

Registered carers are not considered approved child care services by the Australian Government because they do not, or choose not to, meet the minimum operating hours or participate in the Australian Government's quality assurance systems.

Can I get Child Care Benefit (CCB) if I use registered care?

Yes, if you are eligible, and you and your partner meet the work, training, study test or have an exemption.

To receive CCB, however, your carer must be registered with the Family Assistance Office.

Can I get Child Care Rebate (CCR) if I use registered care?

No, you must use approved child care to meet the CCR eligibility requirements.

How much CCB do I get for registered care?

With registered care, you can get the registered care rate for a maximum of 50 hours of care per child per week. Your family's income does not affect the amount you can get.

	2011-2012
Hourly rate for a non-school child	\$0.632
Maximum rate of CCB for 50 hours of care per week for each child	\$31.60

Note: The registered care rate for a school child is 85 per cent of the rate for a non-school child.

How do I meet the work, training, study test for registered care?

For registered care you and your partner only have to participate in work, training or study related commitments at some time during a week or have an exemption. No minimum number of hours is required.

How do I get CCB for registered care?

To get your CCB, take your child care receipts (given to you by your registered carer) to the Family Assistance Office and complete the *Claim for Child Care Benefit for registered care* form (FA018). The Government will pay your CCB into your bank account after you submit a claim.

Your carer cannot receive CCB on your behalf.

You must claim your CCB within 12 months from when the care was provided.

If you use a combination of approved care and registered care you need to claim CCB separately for each type of care.

How do I become a registered carer for CCB purposes?

To become a registered carer you need to:

- apply to the Family Assistance Office
- meet the minimum age requirement, or have a qualification that otherwise determines eligibility for approval as a registered carer. This includes evidence of a recognised qualification as follows:
 1. nanny
 2. child care or
 3. home-based help
- have a Tax File Number
- meet and maintain any relevant State or Territory licensing requirements and restrictions on becoming a registered carer and
- any other requirements required by the Minister of the department

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au

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▶ Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 6

How much Child Care Benefit (CCB) can I get?

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is a payment from the Australian Government for families to reduce their child care fees. CCB is available to families using either approved or registered child care. Most families using approved child care receive this subsidy as a fee reduction at the time they pay their fees. Some receive it as a lump sum at the end of the year.

Your income level and care type determine how much CCB you can receive. If your income is too high, you will not receive any CCB for approved care, but you may still be eligible to receive the Child Care Rebate (CCR).

Families using approved care can access greater rates of CCB than families using registered care. Approved child care must meet additional requirements set by the Australian Government. This includes having a licence to operate, having qualified and trained staff, being open certain hours, and meeting health, safety and other quality standards as set out under the Australian Government Quality Assurance Accreditation system.

How much CCB do I get?

The amount you get depends on your circumstances:

- the type of care you use (approved or registered)
- yours and your partner's income
- the amount of care you use
- the reason you are using care and
- the number of children you have in care.

How much CCB do I get for approved child care?

The information below contains the rates and income limits for the 2011-2012 financial year.

- If your income is \$39,785 or less you may be able to get the maximum amount of CCB. This table shows the maximum amount of CCB you can get for a family with one, two or three children in care.

Number of non-school children in approved care	Maximum amount of CCB for 50 hours of approved care for non-school children, including the multiple child loading	Maximum amount of CCB per hour per non-school child including the multiple child loading
	2011-2012	2011-2012
One	\$189.00	\$3.78
Two	\$395.00	\$3.95
Three	\$616.42	\$4.10
Each additional child	\$205.47	\$4.10

Note: The multiple child percentage is a higher rate of CCB paid to families with two or more children in approved child care. The maximum rate information for two, three or more children in the table above has the multiple child percentage already applied. The formula to calculate the higher rate of CCB for more than one child in approved care includes the standard hourly rate and the family's CCB percentage as advised by the Family Assistance Office. The standard hourly rate for 2011-2012 is \$3.78.

Depending on your circumstances (e.g. your income, what type of child care service you use and the number of hours) you may be entitled to a different rate than stated. You should contact the Family Assistance Office for a more accurate assessment.

Other circumstances that change the rate of CCB entitlement are:

- rates for school children are 85 per cent of the non-school child rates
- a higher part time loading percentage applies to non-school children attending a long day care service for less than 38 hours a week
- a higher standard hourly rate applies to children attending family day care and in home care services for less than 37.5 hours a week
- a higher non-standard hourly rate applies to children attending family day care and in home care services for any hours outside the service's standard hours
- eligible grandparents who have primary care of a child and receive an income support payment will receive full fee relief for each child in approved child care for up to 50 hours per child per week.

Note: If you receive an income support payment you may also get the maximum rate of CCB.

- As your income increases above \$39,785, the amount of CCB decreases.
- If your income is above the income limits shown in the table below, you will not receive any CCB. However, if your CCB entitlement is zero due to income you may still be eligible for the CCR.

CCB is not available over the following limits

Number of children in approved care	Income limits for 2011-2012
One	\$138,065
Two	\$143,095
Three	\$161,581
Each additional child	\$30,528

Note: You can now use the Centrelink/Family Assistance/ Child Support/ Child Care Estimator online to work out your possible entitlement to CCB and CCR for approved child care. These are available at www.familyassist.gov.au or www.mychild.gov.au.

What if my child is absent from child care?

CCB, CCR and if applicable Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance can be paid in some situations if you are charged for child care when your child is absent. You will get CCB and CCR for 42 absence days per child each financial year. These can be for any reason and will not require proof.

You can also get CCB and CCR for additional absence days above this for specific reasons only. There is no limit on these days but you may be required to provide documentation to support the absence. More information is available in Fact Sheet 9—*Absences from child care—Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR)*.

You can also access your child's absence record on your online statement along with your child care attendance, CCB and CCR amounts paid statements. This is available on the Family Assistance Office website, under *Online Services/Child Care/View child care details and payments*, at www.familyassist.gov.au.

How much CCB do I get for registered care?

The table below outlines the amount of CCB you can receive for registered care for the 2011-2012 financial year. Your family's income does not affect the amount you can get.

Registered Care Rate—Non-school child	2011-2012
Per hour each child	\$0.632
Maximum CCB for 50 hours of care per week for each child	\$31.60

Note: rates for school children are 85 per cent of the non-school rate.

How do I receive my CCB for approved care?

There are two ways families can choose to get their CCB, depending on their preferences:

1. You can have it paid directly to your child care service (this means the fees you pay out of your own pocket are reduced)
2. You can choose to pay full fees throughout the financial year and get your CCB as a lump sum after the end of that financial year from the Family Assistance Office

Note: You must claim CCB as reduced fees if you want to receive your CCR as a fortnightly payment either directly to your bank account or through your child care service provider or as a quarterly payment directly to your bank account even if your CCB entitlement is zero due to income. If you choose to receive your CCB as a lump sum, any CCR will be paid directly to your bank account at the end of the financial year after you have claimed your CCB.

How do I receive my CCB for registered care?

To get your CCB for registered care, take your child care receipts (given to you by your registered carer) to the Family Assistance Office and complete the *Claim for Child Care Benefit for registered care* form (FA018). The Government will pay your CCB into your bank account after you submit a claim. You must claim your CCB within 12 months from when the care was provided.

Your carer cannot receive CCB on your behalf.

If you use a combination of approved care and registered care you need to claim Child Care Benefit separately for each type of care.

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



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▶ Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 7

What is the work, training, study test?

To determine how many hours of Child Care Benefit (CCB) you can get, the Australian Government has the work, training, study test— for both approved and registered care. The work, training, study test also determines eligibility for the Child Care Rebate and priority for vacancies in the priority of access guidelines.

The work, training, study test looks at whether you, and your partner if you have one, need child care for a work related commitment.

What is a work related commitment?

This is one or more of these activities:

- paid work
- self employment
- setting up a business
- training or studying
- looking for work
- voluntary work to improve your work skills.

How do I meet the test for approved care?

If you are using approved care, you will get up to 24 hours of CCB per child per week without having to meet the work, training, study test.

However to claim between 24 and 50 hours of CCB per child per week, you have to show that you and your partner have been involved in work related commitments for:

- at least 15 hours a week or
- 30 hours a fortnight or
- have an exemption.

Note: The time you spend in work related activities can be combined with other work related activities to meet the 15 hours per week requirements. Voluntary work that does not improve work skills cannot be combined with other activities and must be undertaken for at least 15 hours a week or 30 hours a fortnight.

Can I average my work related commitments to get up to 50 hours of CCB a week?

Yes. If your work related commitments are at least 30 hours a fortnight, you can receive up to 50 hours of CCB per child for each week in the fortnight. How? Simply average your hours over the fortnight.

Example over a fortnight:

- you work 10 hours one week, and
- you work 20 hours the next week
- this totals 30 hours over the fortnight or 15 hour average per week.

Note: averaging your hours does not apply for a period greater than a fortnight.

How do I meet the test for the Child Care Rebate?

You and your partner only have to participate in work related commitments at some time during a week or have an exemption. No minimum number of hours is required.

How do I meet the test for registered care?

For registered care you and your partner only have to participate in work related commitments at some time during a week or have an exemption. No minimum number of hours is required.

How do I meet the test for the priority of access guidelines?

For the priority of access guidelines you and your partner only have to participate in work related commitments at some time during a week or have an exemption. No minimum number of hours is required.

Does anything else satisfy the work, training, study test?

Yes. You will satisfy the work, training, study test if you are:

- on annual or long service leave
- sick or other paid leave
- on paid or unpaid parental leave
- self employment leave
- self employment sick leave
- receiving Carer Payment
- receiving Carer Allowance
- caring for a disabled person
- on carer leave or carer sick leave.

Are there any exemptions from the work, training, study test?

Yes you may be exempt if:

- you or your partner get Carer Allowance or Carer Payment from Centrelink for a child
- you or your partner are a grandparent with primary care for your grandchild
- you or your partner have a disability (the other partner must still meet the work, training, study test)
- you or your partner are overseas or in prison (the other partner must still meet the work, training, study test)
- you are facing exceptional circumstances.

How can I get more information?

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What are my responsibilities for receiving Child Care Benefit (CCB)?

When receiving CCB you are responsible for keeping the Australian Government and your carer up-to-date and notifying them when your circumstances change.

Here is a checklist of responsibilities:

- provide your child care service/s with your Customer Reference Numbers, dates of birth and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance assessment notice,
- sign or initial attendance records daily to show when your child starts care ('time in') and finishes care ('time out')—do not sign blank attendance records
- sign or initial attendance records each time your child is absent from care
- inform each child care service you are using when you have used your initial 42 absence days (only if you receive CCB as a fee reduction) and provide your child care service with documents where necessary for:
 - additional absence days your child is absent from care
 - an increase in the number of maximum hours you can get paid CCB
 - Special Child Care Benefit
- advise the Family Assistance Office when changes happen that may affect your CCB. These include when:
 - your child stops using child care
 - your child starts or leaves school
 - your and your partner's income changes
 - you change partnering arrangements (opposite or same-sex) for example—if you get married, registered, separated or divorced
 - your or your partner's residence status changes
 - your address or bank account details change.

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au

Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au

Family Assistance, The What, Why and How booklet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

Family Assistance Office Guide to Payments fact sheet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

If you need to, you can also call:



Teletypewriter (TTY) 1800 810 586 (if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment).

You need a TTY phone to use this service.

13 12 02 if you need information in a language other than English.



Absences from child care—Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR)

There are times, like public holidays, when you will be charged for care even though your child was absent from care.

If the absences are your initial 42 absence days, additional absence days or approved under the exceptional circumstances provision, the Australian Government will still pay you CCB, CCR and if applicable Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance. This is for approved child care including Family Day Care, In Home Care, Outside School Hours Care and Long Day Care. Absences are treated differently for Occasional Care.

What is an absence day?

You will get CCB and CCR for 42 absence days per child each financial year. These can be for any reason and will not require proof and include public holidays.

You cannot claim absences if your child has not started care or has stopped care. You also cannot claim an absence if you have notified your child care service you are taking your child out of care on a set date and then change your mind and remove your child earlier.

If your child is absent for one or more than one session of child care on the same day, such as both before and after school care, it is counted as one absence day.

If you receive CCB as a fee reduction at more than one child care service you must let each service know when your child has used your initial 42 absence days.

Why do I pay for child care on a public holiday?

Charging practices are commercial decisions made independently by individual child care service providers and are not a matter regulated by family assistance law. This includes the widely-used practice of charging for public holidays when your child does not attend care. This practice is used by child care service providers because child care workers, like most employees, are entitled to be paid for public holidays when they would otherwise be at work.

What is an additional absence day?

You can also get CCB and CCR for additional absence days once your initial 42 absence days have been used. There is no limit on these days but you may be required to provide documentation to support the absence.

The additional absence days reasons are:

- illness (with a medical certificate), or another absence due to sickness of the child, a parent or sibling, supported by medical certificates
- non-immunisation
- rostered days off
- rotating shift work
- temporary closure of a school or pupil-free days
- period of local emergency – the service is closed or the child is unable to travel to the service

- shared care arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan or parenting order
- attendance at preschool
- exceptional circumstances

What is a parenting plan?

A parenting plan can take any form, but to be a parenting plan under the *Family Law Act 1975* it must be in writing, signed and dated by both parents. It must be made free from any threat, duress or coercion. When providing documentation for shared care arrangements, it is not sufficient to have a verbal agreement or a statutory declaration signed by just one parent, describing the arrangement.

Parenting plans are developed by both parents, sometimes with the help of the Family Relationship Centre. For examples and more information about parenting plans you can go to the Family Relationships website at www.familyrelationships.gov.au or call 1800 050 321.

What are exceptional circumstances?

You may also get CCB and CCR for up to 20 further absence days for your child to take a break from care. Exceptional circumstances are when you have used 31 or more of your initial 42 absence days for one or more of these reasons:

- an illness or illnesses (with a medical certificate)
- rotating shifts or rostered days off
- shared care arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan or parenting order.

You must provide supporting documentation to show that the 31 or more of the initial 42 absences were used for these specific absence reasons—for example, the supporting documentation for illness is a medical certificate. If your child has a medical certificate specifying a long-term illness, you do not need a separate medical certificate for each additional absence day.

Can I get absences for Occasional Care?

You will get CCB and CCR for an absence if you have booked and paid for the child care your child was absent from at your Occasional Care service. There is no limit on the number of absences.

What are my child care services responsible for?

Your child care services must keep a record of each absence for your child. Each service must let you know regularly.

You can also access your child's absence record on your online statement along with your child care attendance, CCB and CCR amounts paid statements. These are available on the Family Assistance Office website, under *Online Services/Child Care/View child care details and payments*, at www.familyassist.gov.au.

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

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Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au

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▶ Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 10

What is the Child Care Rebate (CCR)?

The CCR is a payment from the Australian Government that helps working families with the cost of child care. If you are using approved child care for work, training or study-related reasons the Government will provide you with 50 per cent of your out-of-pocket child care costs, up to the annual cap. From 1 July 2010 the CCR annual cap will be \$7,500 per child per year, subject to the passage of legislation.

From July 2011 you have the option to receive your CCR paid fortnightly, either directly to your bank account, or through your child care service provider as a fee reduction. You still have the option of having your CCR paid quarterly or annually as a lump sum directly to your bank account.

Who can get the CCR?

There are certain requirements you must meet to get the CCR. You must have:

- used approved child care
- been eligible for Child Care Benefit (CCB) (entitled at a rate of zero or more)*
- passed the work, training, study test (for the purposes of the rebate).

***Note: There is no income test for the CCR. If you are eligible for CCB but your CCB entitlement is zero due to income, you may still be eligible for the CCR.**

What is the work, training, study test?

To get the CCR, both you and your partner (if you have one) must have had work, training or study-related commitments at some time during a week or have an exemption. No minimum number of hours is required.

For more information about this test, contact the Family Assistance Office by visiting www.familyassist.gov.au or calling 13 61 50.

What is approved care?

Approved care covers child care services approved by the Government because they meet certain quality standards and operating requirements. Services include:

- Long Day Care
- Family Day Care
- Outside School Hours Care (including before and after school and during school holidays)
- Occasional Care
- In Home Care.

To find out if your child care service is approved, call the Child Care Access Hotline on 1800 670 305 or search the www.mychild.gov.au website.

It is important to note that you cannot get the CCR for registered care.

How much CCR can I get?

From July 2011 for the 2011–12 financial year, if you meet the eligibility criteria you can get 50 per cent of your out-of-pocket child care expenses up to the annual cap. From 1 July 2010 the CCR annual cap will be \$7,500 per child per year, subject to the passage of legislation.

Out-of-pocket expenses mean the amount you pay for child care after your CCB and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) amounts are taken out. For more information on CCB and JETCCFA please see the specific fact sheet on the web site at

www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Resources.

Payment process to receive CCR

There are four ways to receive your CCR:

1. Direct to your approved child care service paid fortnightly
2. Direct to your bank account paid fortnightly
3. Quarterly payment to your bank account
4. Annual payment to your bank account

When you choose a payment option, this option will be applied for the entire 2011-2012 financial year.

Fortnightly payments

From July 2011, the timing of the fortnightly payment depends on how frequently your child care service provider submits your child care attendance records. For some families this will mean a fortnightly payment but for others it will actually be paid weekly.

Where you are receiving a higher than zero rate of CCB and you choose the CCR fortnightly payment option, the Family Assistance Office will withhold 15 per cent of the payment to ensure that you do not accumulate a debt or overpayment of CCB or CCR within a financial year. The balance of these funds withheld will be reconciled at the end of the financial year (when your tax returns have been lodged and all your child care attendance information has been received). Any outstanding amounts will be paid as a direct payment to your bank account.

Where your CCB entitlement is zero you will receive your full 50 per cent CCR as a fortnightly payment up to the annual cap. As you do not receive CCB during the year, there is no risk of a debt after the end of the financial year reconciliation process.

If you want to receive your CCR as a fortnightly payment either directly to your bank account or through your child care service provider, you must claim CCB as reduced fees, even if you are eligible for CCB but your entitlement is zero due to income.

Quarterly Payments

Quarterly payments will be paid once the Family Assistance Office has received child care attendance details from your approved child care service/s. Quarterly payments will be paid to you automatically if you receive your CCB as reduced fees, at the zero rate, or more than the zero rate unless you nominate to receive fortnightly payments.

At the end of the financial year, the CCR will be reconciled against your actual income and adjusted for the financial year. Payment of the last quarter of the CCR will be —held” until CCB reconciliation occurs (when your tax returns have been lodged and all your child care attendance information has been received). This

will then be used in any adjustments as part of the reconciliation. The CCR entitlement is paid directly into your bank account by the Family Assistance Office.

If you want to receive your CCR as a quarterly payment directly to your bank account, you must claim CCB as reduced fees, even if you are eligible for CCB but your CCB entitlement is zero due to income.

Annual Payment

The CCR is based on your CCB entitlement. If you choose to claim CCB as a lump sum payment, you will not receive your CCR entitlement until the end of that year, once your CCB entitlement has been determined.

When can I get my quarterly payments?

The table below contains the CCR quarterly payment timelines for the 2011-2012 financial year.

Table 1: CCR quarterly periods and payment timelines for 2011-2012.

Quarter	Child Care Rebate Quarterly Periods	Child Care Rebate Payment Periods If parents have not received their payment within a week of the end of the relevant payment period below they may need to contact the Family Assistance Office on 13 6150
	2011-2012	2011-2012
One	4 July 2011—2 October 2011	19 October 2011—1 November 2011
Two	3 October 2011—1 January 2012	2 January 2012—31 January 2012
Three	2 January 2012—1 April 2012	18 April 2012—1 May 2012
Four	2 April 2012—1 July 2012	23 July 2012 onwards If tax returns have been lodged for the 2011-2012 financial year with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and attendance information is received from the parent's Child Care Service Provider.

What if my child is absent from child care?

CCB and CCR and if applicable JETCCFA can be paid in some situations if you are charged for child care when your child is absent.

You will get CCB and CCR for 42 absence days per child each financial year. These can be for any reason and will not require proof.

You can also get CCB and CCR for additional absence days above this for specific reasons only. There is no limit on these days but you may be required to provide documentation to support the absence. More information is available in Fact Sheet 9—Absences from child care—Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR).

You can also access your child's absence record on your online statement along with your child care attendance and CCB and CCR amounts paid statements. These are available on the Family Assistance Office website, under *Online Services/ Child Care/View child care details and payments*, at www.familyassist.gov.au.

What if I did not get CCB?

If you have now identified that you are eligible for CCB but have not received it, you can lodge a lump sum claim with the Family Assistance Office. You must do this within two years of the end of the financial year for which you are claiming. Once you have received your CCB entitlement, you are then eligible for the CCR if you used approved care and were working, training or studying or had an exemption.

If you were not eligible for CCB, you will not be able to get the CCR.

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au

Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au

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Family Assistance Office Guide to Payments fact sheet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

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Teletypewriter (TTY) 1800 810 586 (if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment).

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▶ Information for families using child care

Fact Sheet 11

Is there any extra help I can get with my child care cost?

In addition to Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate, the Australian Government provides other assistance to help you with the cost of child care.

Jobs Education and Training (JET) Child Care fee assistance

JET Child Care fee assistance provides extra help with child care costs for parents on income support while looking for work, studying or starting a job. It covers most of the child care costs. From 1 July 2008 eligibility for JET Child Care fee assistance increased from up to 12 months of full-time study, regardless of the course duration, to up to 24 months. You can also get assistance if you want to study or train part-time.

Need more information?

Call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB)

GCCB helps grandparents who are the primary carers for their grandchildren and who receive an income support payment. GCCB pays the full cost of child care fees for each child in approved care for up to 50 hours a week.

Grandparents will need to meet the CCB eligibility requirements to claim GCCB.

Need more information?

Call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB)

SCCB can help where there is a:

- child at risk of serious abuse or neglect, or
- family with an exceptional case of short term financial hardship which has substantially reduced their capacity to pay child care fees.

SCCB can pay up to the full cost of child care fees for a limited time.

Need more information?

Contact your child care service.

Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

The AMEP provides free English language training to eligible, newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants to Australia (through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship).

You can get free child care for under school age children while you study under the program.

Need more information?

For further information on the Adult Migrant English Program or a list of program providers please contact the Department of Immigration and Citizenship



visit www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/amep/



call 13 18 81 or the translating and interpreting service on 131 450

How can I get more information?



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

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What is Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Child Care fee assistance?

If you are on an income support payment you may be able to get JET Child Care fee assistance. This is a payment to help you with the cost of your approved child care by paying some of the 'gap fee' not covered by Child Care Benefit while you are working, training or studying so you can enter or re-enter the workforce.

Can I get JET Child Care fee assistance?

Yes, if you:

- receive an eligible Centrelink payment*
- have an approved Centrelink Employment Pathway Plan (EPP)
- receive Child Care Benefit (CCB) at the maximum rate
- use approved child care (for example, Long Day Care, Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care).

**Eligible Centrelink payments include:*

- Newstart Allowance
- Parenting Payment
- Widow Allowance
- Partner Allowance
- Community Development Employment Project Participant Supplement
- Youth Allowance (for jobseekers)
- Carer Payment
- Widow B Pension
- A means tested ABSTUDY payment
- Special Benefit (in certain circumstances).

What activities does JET Child Care fee assistance support?

JET Child Care fee assistance supports many activities up to a limited amount of time which varies from activity to activity. Here are the activities:

- searching for a job—up to 20 days in 20 weeks
- paid and unpaid work—for the initial 26 weeks of a job
- study or training—for up to 24 months from July 2008
- participating in a labour market program—e.g. Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP), Work for the Dole (WFD) and Green Corps
- participating in a Government funded rehabilitation program
- other activities that help parents engage in sustainable paid work.

How much can I get?

JET Child Care fee assistance can help meet the cost of child care by paying some of the 'gap fee'. The 'gap fee' is the difference between the amount you are charged and the amount you get for CCB. You will need to pay 10c per hour per child to your service. The Government will pay your CCB and any gap fee. If you use more hours than you are entitled to you will have to pay the full cost for these additional hours.

You may also be eligible for the Child Care Rebate (CCR) which will provide you with 50 per cent of your 10c per hour per child contribution.

How many hours a week can I get JET Child Care fee assistance for?

This depends on:

- the type of child care you need
- the number of hours you are charged for care by your child care service and
- if you (and your partner, if you have one) meet the work, training, study test.

Note: The number of hours you receive JET Child Care fee assistance for in a week cannot be more than the hours you receive CCB in the same week, i.e. 24 or 50 hours

How do I receive my JET Child Care fee assistance?

JET Child Care fee assistance is paid just like your CCB. It is paid directly to your approved child care service, so that the fees you pay are reduced.

What if my child is absent from child care?

JET Child Care fee assistance, CCB and CCR can be paid in some situations if you are charged for child care when your child is absent.

You will get JET Child Care fee assistance, CCB and CCR for 42 absence days per child each financial year. These can be for any reason and will not require proof and include public holidays.

You can also get JET Child Care fee assistance, CCB and CCR for additional absence days above this for specific reasons only. There is no limit on these days but you may be required to provide documentation to support the absence. More information is available in Fact Sheet 9—*Absences from child care—Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR)*.

You can also access your child's absence record on your online statement along with your child care attendance and CCB and CCR amounts paid statements. These are available on the Family Assistance Office website, under *Online Services/ Child Care/View child care details and payments*, at www.familyassist.gov.au.

How can I get more information?

For further information on your eligibility for JET Child Care fee assistance please contact the Family Assistance Office:



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

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What child care services are available in regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

The Australian Government directly funds child care services in some regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These services are referred to as Non Mainstream Services.

Non Mainstream Services are funded to address the following issues:

- the failure of the market to deliver mainstream child care (for example, in regional and remote areas); and
- the need for culturally competent services, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focussed child care services (across all geographic areas, from metropolitan to remote).

The common objectives of all Non Mainstream Services are to provide:

- quality child care that enhances the cultural, physical, social, emotional, language and learning development of all children;
- flexible early childhood education and child care services that meet the needs of all families in the community; and
- developmentally and culturally appropriate play and learning experiences which foster individual children's strengths, abilities and interests.

Non Mainstream Services are generally not approved for the purposes of administering Child Care Benefit (CCB) so families using these services are not eligible to claim CCB or the Child Care Rebate (CCR). The cost to families in using these services, however, is usually minimal as the Australian Government meets the majority of the costs involved in providing these services through operational funding grants.

Who is eligible to use Non Mainstream Services?

While the majority of Non Mainstream Services are designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, services are open to all children in the relevant community and are tailored to the needs of the whole community.

What services are available?

Australian Government supported child care services in regional and remote areas include:

- Flexible services including Long Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Occasional Care, Mobile Multi-Purpose Services, On-Farm Care, Multi-Sited Child Care, and Over Night Care.
- Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services to meet the cultural, social and development needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.
- Mobile children's services, that visit remote areas and provide occasional care, school holiday care, playgroups, story telling, games and toy library services.
- Indigenous early learning services such as playgroups, crèches and nutrition programs.
- Family Day Care which provides care and learning and development activities in a carer's home.

- In Home Care which provides care and learning and development activities in a child's own home. In Home Care is available for families without access to a child care service or where child care services cannot meet their needs.

How can I get more information?

For further information on child care services in regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:



visit mychild.gov.au



call 13 36 84, identify the state or territory office that you wish to speak to and ask for 'Child Care Support'

Useful resources

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Is there any extra assistance for my child with additional needs?

The Australian Government's Inclusion and Professional Support Program aims to promote and maintain high quality care and inclusion for all children in eligible child care services, by increasing the skill level of carers, educators and management in line with nationally consistent priorities.

If your child has disability or is from a culturally and linguistically diverse, humanitarian intervention, refugee or Indigenous background, your child care service may be eligible for extra assistance through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

What assistance is available?

Specialist assistance is available through Inclusion Support Agencies. These regionally based organisations employ a network of skilled staff, called Inclusion Support Facilitators. These facilitators work directly with child care services to develop their capacity to include children with additional needs.

Inclusion Support Facilitators also assist child care services to access additional assistance such as:

- **Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS)** - aims to build the capacity of child care services to assist them to provide programs that are inclusive of all children. The ISS is a contribution paid to child care services to increase the staff-to-child ratio over and above the licensing requirements, so they can include children with ongoing high support needs, such as those with diagnosed disability. In centre based services, the ISS provides funding as a contribution towards the costs associated with employing an additional educator to increase the staff to child ratio when a child with ongoing high support needs is in care. The ISS provides an extra payment for carers in home based services in recognition of the additional care required by children with ongoing high support needs.
- **Flexible Support Funding** - is time limited support provided to eligible child care services to build their capacity to include a child or children with ongoing high support needs. Flexible Support Funding is a contribution towards the costs associated with employing additional staff to increase the staff to child ratio for a time limited period or to assist home based carers to attend training outside business hours.

Other forms of support under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program

- **Bicultural Support** - provides additional resources to eligible childcare services to assist with the inclusion of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), refugee or humanitarian intervention background children, and Indigenous children. A worker engaged by the Bicultural Support Program can offer time-limited support from either off-site consultants or an on-site casual bilingual or bicultural worker. Access to bicultural support is provided to eligible child care services free of charge.
- **Specialist Equipment** - is available on loan from the Specialist Equipment provider to eligible child care services (excluding In Home Care) to assist with the inclusion of children who have ongoing high support needs in a child care environment.
- **General Resource Library** - provides up-to-date information and resources on child care practice and research findings and assists in meeting the inclusion and professional support needs of eligible child care services.

What is the process for accessing the Inclusion Support Subsidy, Flexible Support Funding, and other forms of support available through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program?

To access support through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program, child care services can contact their local Inclusion Support Agency. The agency will then arrange for an Inclusion Support Facilitator to visit the child care service to discuss the service's needs. Part of this discussion may involve the preparation of a Service Support Plan. These plans determine if additional assistance is required and, if so, what type of assistance would best meet the service's needs.

Child Care Services can also contact their Professional Support Coordinator or Indigenous Professional Support Unit. A Professional Support Coordinator is located in every state and territory and provides professional development, advice or resources to help services provide quality child care. Indigenous Professional Support Units have a similar role to the Professional Support Coordinators, except their focus is to help Indigenous child care services. Contact details for the Professional Support Coordinators and Indigenous Professional Support Units can be found at the department's website (see below).

Which services are eligible for assistance through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program?

Services that can access assistance through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program are:

- Australian Government child care services approved for Child Care Benefit, including long day care services, outside school hours care (including vacation care), family day care, occasional care, and in home care.
- Australian Government child care services funded under the Budget Based Funding Program, including, flexible/innovative services; mobile child care services, Multi-functional Aboriginal Children's Services; Indigenous Playgroups, Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs, crèches and innovative child care service centres.

How can I get more information?

To discuss your child's care needs, speak with your local child care service who will advise you on the type of support they can provide, or the support they may need to access through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

For more information about the Inclusion and Professional Support Program you can visit the department's website at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices>

Useful resources

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Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au
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How do I know if my child is attending a quality service?

You want the best possible care for children and so does the Australian Government. This is why the Australian Government has created a formal quality assurance system for child care. This system builds on and complements state and territory government licensing regulations, which generally provide a minimum standard of operation for child care services.

Role of the state and territory governments

State and territory government licensing regulations for child care services cover a range of factors including:

- having a license to operate
- adequate space and equipment
- suitable and qualified staff
- appropriate staff to child ratios.

Role of the Australian Government

The Australian Government is responsible for ensuring the quality of care in relation to:

- positive learning experiences for children in care
- relationships between children and their carers
- relationships between you and your carer
- the types and quality of programs offered
- safe and protective environment for children.

What is the child care quality assurance system?

This system aims to ensure your children have positive experiences and learn and grow while in care. It focuses on quality relationships between you, your children and your carer and child care that is innovative, flexible and meets your needs.

Child care services need to meet (and continue to meet) the quality assurance standards to be approved by the Australian Government.

What type of care does the Australian Government assess?

- Long Day Care Centres
- Family Day Care
- Outside School Hours Care

Do all services have to comply with the Australian Government's quality assurance system?

All Long Day Care, Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services approved for Child Care Benefit must comply. However, other child care services even if approved for Child Care Benefit or those providing registered care are not required at present to participate in the Quality Assurance System.

Changes to the quality assurance systems

The Australian Government has committed to improving quality in child care as part of its broader agenda for early childhood education and care. Stronger quality standards and a five category rating system are key components of the policy change. Work to develop the new system will involve broad consultation with the sector, families and experts. The government will also work with State and Territory Governments to build a more cohesive system.

How often does the Australian Government assess each child care service?

National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Officers visit each child care service every two and a half years. Spot visits are also undertaken periodically to assess whether services are meeting Australian Government quality standards on a continuing basis.

Who assesses each child care service for the Australian Government?

The NCAC administers the quality assurance system. The NCAC is an independent body, funded by the Australian Government, that reports to Government if a child care service is not meeting requirements.

How do I make sure I choose quality child care?

The NCAC publishes the accreditation status and history of all participating child care services.

How can I get more information?

For further information about the quality of your child care service please contact the National Childcare Accreditation Council:



visit www.ncac.gov.au



call 1300 136 554

or further information on the different types of approved care and reported vacancies please contact the Australian Government Child Care Access Hotline:



call 1800 670 305

Useful resources

Family Information Kit – available at ncac.gov.au

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au

Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au

Family Assistance, The What, Why and How booklet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

Family Assistance Office Guide to Payments fact sheet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

If you need to, you can also call:



Teletypewriter (TTY) 1800 810 586 (if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment).

You need a TTY phone to use this service.

13 12 02 if you need information in a language other than English.



Will my child be given priority for child care services?

We understand that getting your child into quality child care is an important priority. Sometimes, there may be a waiting list for child care services and to ensure the system is fair, the Australian Government has 'Priority of Access Guidelines'.

What are the Priority of Access Guidelines?

The guidelines only apply to approved child care. They are used when there is a waiting list for a child care service or when a number of parents are applying for a limited number of vacant places.

Every approved child care service has to abide by the guidelines and tell you about them when you enrol your child into care.

Priorities

- **Priority 1**—a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- **Priority 2**—a child of a parent (or both parents if you have a partner) who satisfies the Government's work, training, study test (for the purposes of the priority of access guidelines)*.
- **Priority 3**—any other child.

Within these main categories priority should also be given to:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- children in families which include a disabled person
- children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold of \$39 785 for 2011-2012, or who or whose partner is on income support
- children in families from a non-English speaking background
- children in socially isolated families
- children of single parents.

*Note: To satisfy the work, training, study test for the purposes of the priority of access guidelines, both you and your partner (if you have one) must have work, training or study-related activities at some time during the week or have an exemption. No minimum number of hours is required. More information is available in Fact Sheet 7—What is the work, training, study test?

A child care service may require a Priority 3 child to vacate a place to make room for a child with a higher priority. They can only do so if you:

- are notified when your child first entered care that your service follows this policy
- are given at least 14 days notice of the need for your child to vacate.

Outside School Hours Care

Outside School Hours Care is primarily for school children. A service may ask a child not yet in school to leave care if a child who is in school applies for a place.

Employer sponsored places

If a child care service is funded by an employer for their employees' children it can give priority to those children.

How can I get more information?

For further information on the different types of approved care and reported vacancies:



visit mychild.gov.au



call the Australian Government Child Care Access Hotline 1800 670 305 (a service is also

available if you require information in a language other than English).

Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au

Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au

Family Assistance, The What, Why and How booklet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

Family Assistance Office Guide to Payments fact sheet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

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Where can I find a child care service that meets my needs?

What is mychild.gov.au?

The mychild website provides families and carers with information on early childhood education, child care, children's health and wellbeing and parenting and family support services. You can also search a database to find Child Care Benefit approved children's services in your local area.

What information can I find on mychild.gov.au?

The mychild website contains a searchable database of all Child Care Benefit approved services where you can find:

- information on the types of care (Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Occasional Care, In Home Care and Outside School Hours Care)
- the location of child care services including an interactive map and contact details
- possible vacancies
- fee information where provided by child care services
- additional information on education programs, meals and other services provided.

What is the Child Care Access Hotline?

The Australian Government Child Care Access Hotline is a free telephone service to help you find a child care service that meets your needs.

You can access this service via **Freecall 1800 670 305** between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm nationally Monday to Friday (charges apply on calls from public pay phones or mobile phones).

What can I find out through the Child Care Access Hotline?

Hotline information includes:

- types of care (for example, Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Occasional Care, In Home Care and Outside School Hours Care)
- the location of child care services
- possible vacancies
- fee information where provided by child care services
- how to choose a quality child care service
- how the Australian Government helps with the cost of your child care.

How can I get more information?

For further information on child care services call the Child Care Access Hotline:



call 1800 670 305* (a service is also available if you require information in a language other than English) between 8.00am and 6.00pm nationally

Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au
Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator at www.familyassist.gov.au
Family Assistance, The What, Why and How booklet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au
Family Assistance Office Guide to Payments fact sheet, available at www.familyassist.gov.au

If you need to, you can also call:



Teletypewriter (TTY) 1800 810 586 (if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment).

You need a TTY phone to use this service.

13 12 02 if you need information in a language other than English.



▶ Information for families using child care

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Where do I go for more information on child care?

There are a number of Australian Government contacts where you can receive information on child care. They include:

Child Care Access Hotline

Hotline information includes:

- the different types of care (Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Occasional Care, In Home Care and Outside School Hours Care)
- the location of child care services
- possible vacancies
- fee information where provided by child care services
- how to choose a quality child care service
- how the Australian Government helps with the cost of your child care.

What is the Child Care Access Hotline number and when can I call?

Call 1800 670 305* between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm nationally Monday to Friday

A service is also available if you need information in a language other than English

If you need to, you can also call:

Teletypewriter (TTY) 1800 639 327 (if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment). You need a TTY phone to use this service.

**Calls to 1800 numbers are free. Calls from public pay phones or mobile phones are charged at a higher*

Family Assistance Office

The Family Assistance Office administers Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate, Paid Parental Leave, Baby Bonus, Maternity Immunisation Allowance and Family Tax Benefit payments. It has been set up in Centrelink and Medicare offices across the country, offering a range of payments to support families with their work and family responsibilities.

The Family Assistance Office can be contacted:

- at *familyassist.gov.au* for online services
- on 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday
- by email through *familyassist.gov.au*
- by visiting a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres)

Teletypewriter (TTY) 1800 810 586 (if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment). You need a TTY phone to use this service. Call 13 12 02 if you need information in a language other than English.

Useful resources

- Visit the mychild website at www.mychild.gov.au for news and information on child care
- Visit familyassist.gov.au for:
 - information on Centrelink/Family Assistance/Child Support/Child Care Estimator
 - The What, Why and How of Family Assistance publication
 - Family Assistance Office Guide to Payments fact sheets

Immunisation

For up-to-date information on your child's immunisation records (seven and under) call the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register in Medicare Australia on 1800 653 809 or visit medicareaustralia.gov.au.

For other questions on immunisation call Freecall 1800 671 811.

The Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care

For information on different types of child care visit the mychild.gov.au website.

National Child Care Accreditation Council

Concerned about the quality of your child care? Contact your child care centre and discuss the matter. Then, if you are not satisfied, raise your concern with the National Childcare Accreditation Council on 1300 136 554 (toll free).

Department of Immigration and Citizenship

For information on receiving child care help when participating in the Adult Migrant English Program, call the enquiry line on 131 881, the translating and interpreting service line on 131 450 or visit

<http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/amep/>

Australian Taxation Office

For information on the Child Care Tax Rebate for the 2004–05 and 2005–06 financial years call 13 28 61 or visit ato.gov.au. For information on exemptions from Fringe Benefit Tax benefits relating to child care, call 13 28 66.



Absences from child care due to a local emergency—Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR)

There are times when you will be charged for care even though your child was absent from care.

If the absences are your initial 42 absence days, additional absence days or approved under the exceptional circumstances provision, the Australian Government will still pay you CCB, CCR and if applicable Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee assistance. This is for approved child care, including Family Day Care, In Home Care, Outside School Hours Care and Long Day Care.

(Absences are treated differently for Occasional Care. See below: Can I get absences for Occasional Care?)

Absences due to a local emergency are treated as additional absences.

What is a local emergency?

A local emergency is an event that:

- Affects a widespread area and has a severe impact on the lives of a significant number of inhabitants (for example, major damage to homes and businesses, or personal injury to local inhabitants due to an event such as a bushfire or flood); or
- Disrupts the normal operation of a substantial number of child care services in the area (for example, closure by health authorities due to a disease outbreak).

What happens if a local emergency is declared?

Where a local emergency is declared it is possible that your child care service provider will need to close. For example this may happen under the new catastrophic (code red) fire danger ratings system. If your child would normally have attended care on that day your service may still charge you fees even though the service is closed because of a local emergency. These are treated as additional absence days.

Do I still receive CCB and CCR for absences due to a local emergency?

You can get CCB and CCR for additional absence days if you are charged child care fees on days your child would normally attend child care and your service is closed because of a local emergency.

If your CCB entitlement is zero due to your income, you may still be eligible for the CCR. If you meet the eligibility criteria for CCR you can get 50 per cent of your out-of-pocket child care expenses for approved care up to the annual cap of \$7,500 per child per year, subject to the passage of legislation.

From July 2011 you have the option to receive your CCR paid fortnightly, either directly to your bank account, or through your child care service provider as a fee reduction. This means you can access your CCR payment at the time you incur your child care costs during a local emergency or for other absence days. You can still have the option to receive your CCR quarterly or annually as a lump sum directly to your bank account.

If you receive CCB for additional absences during a local emergency they will not be added to your child's absence count. There is no limit on the number of absence days for which you get CCB and CCR during the local emergency.

Correct as at 010711



Why do I pay for child care when my child care service is closed?

Charging practices are commercial decisions made independently by individual child care service providers and are not a matter regulated by family assistance law.

Is assistance available if I can't pay my child care fees?

If you are facing financial hardship as a result of the local emergency and you are unable to pay your child care fees you can discuss the option of applying for Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB) with your child care service provider. Supporting documentation will need to be supplied when you seek assistance.

SCCB can pay up to the full cost of child care fees to give your family time to recover from or adjust to circumstances following a hardship event. It can be paid for up to 52 weeks. An initial period of up to 13 weeks is able to be approved by your child care service provider. Additional periods can be approved by the Family Assistance Office.

Can I receive CCB and CCR for absences from Occasional Care?

You will receive CCB and CCR for an absence if you have booked and paid for the child care your child was absent from at your Occasional Care service. There is no limit on the number of absences.

What is my child care service responsible for?

Your child care service must keep a record of each absence for your child. Your service must let you know regularly how many absences have been used. Services are required to provide families with statements at least every 3 months.

You can also access your child's absence record on your online statement available on the Family Assistance Office website under Online Services/Child Care/View child care details and payments at www.familyassist.gov.au.



How can I get more information?

For more information on your eligibility for CCB and CCR please contact the Family Assistance Office



access online services at www.familyassist.gov.au



call 13 61 50 between 8am and 8pm (local time) Monday to Friday



email through www.familyassist.gov.au



visit a Family Assistance Office (located in Medicare Offices and Centrelink Customer Service Centres).

Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at www.mychild.gov.au
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