Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

# What is the Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)?

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS, child wellbeing) helps parents and caregivers get reduced child care fees for children who are considered to be ‘at risk’. Children in the care of the CEO are ‘at risk’. ACCS is paid directly to the child care provider to lower the total cost before it is passed to the carer/parent.

ACCS gives eligible individuals up to 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight and the lower of either:

* 100% of the child care fee ***if*** it is equal to or below the [hourly rate cap](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/type-child-care-you-use-can-affect-child-care-subsidy?context=41186#hourlyrate); or
* up to 120% of the hourly rate cap ***if*** the fee is above the hourly rate cap.

In most cases, the subsidy will cover the full cost of child care. If the subsidy does not cover everything, the Department will ***only*** cover or reimburse costs that are pre-approved by a financial delegate.

As the subsidy must be paid to an ‘eligible individual’, the carer must make a CCS claim to become approved for subsidy payments.

# Child Care Subsidy eligibility criteria

* The child must be 13 or under (some exceptions apply);
* The child must be immunised in accordance with the Northern Territory immunisation schedule; and
* The carer must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or be a Special Category Visa (SCV).

Carers must be approved by Centrelink for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to access the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS). Some carers might mistakenly believe they won’t qualify for CCS because of the income or activity test; this is a misconception. CCS eligibility and CCS entitlements are two separate things and activity level and income does not affect CCS eligibility.

# Overview

When the Department of Children and Families gives you approval for a child or young person in your care to attend child care, and you and/or your co-carer meet the eligibility criteria for Child Care Subsidy (CCS), you must make an application to Centrelink for CCS.

Your CCS application will need to be linked to your MyGov account. When Centrelink has finished assessing your CCS claim, they will notify you about the outcome.

Some child care providers may charge a higher rate which is not covered by the subsidy; this is referred to as a gap payment. The Department can pay the gap fee if it’s pre-approved by a financial delegate.

# What are my responsibilities?

[ ]  Be willing to apply for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

[ ]  To seek approval from the practitioner to enrol a child into child care.

[ ]  To provide the practitioner with the CCS claim receipt to show when the claim was lodged.

[ ]  To enrol the child into the approved child care.

[ ]  To enter into a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) with the provider. The CWA is the mechanism that makes the carer responsible for child care fees. This allows Centrelink to pay the subsidy to the approved individual.

[ ]  To confirm the child care enrolment in MyGov and notify the practitioner once completed.

[ ]  To notify the practitioner and child care provider when the subsidy claim is approved.

[ ]  To give the practitioner any invoices for outstanding fees within 14 days of receipt.

[ ]  Carers are responsible for upfront child care fees while the CCS claim is processed, unless a Provider Eligible Agreement (PEA) is in place. The Department will cover or reimburse these costs as this would have been pre-approved.

[ ]  **You must notify Centrelink of any changes within 14 days.** If there is an accrued debt for child care because you did not inform Centrelink about your changes, the Department will not reimburse you.

# [ ]  Important: Please talk with your child care provider to end the enrolment with them. Then, email the provider with a summary of your conversation. The child care provider will update your enrolment details and end date. When the enrolment ends, Centrelink stops paying your subsidy, and the enrolment will be displayed in your online account as ‘ceased’.

# How do I make an application?

To lodge a claim for Child Care Subsidy carers must:

[ ]  Set up a [MyGov](https://my.gov.au/en/create-account/) account.

[ ]  Link the Centrelink service to your MyGov. You will need your Customer Reference Number (CRN). If you do not know your CRN, contact Centrelink and they will help you obtain a linking code to connect the service.

[ ]  Gather supporting documents from your practitioner for the CCS claim. This includes the subsidy support letter, a copy of the child’s protection order or care agreement and the child’s Centrelink Customer Registration Number (CRN).

[ ]  Lodge your CCS claim on MyGov within two weeks of commencing child care. The earlier the better as it can take up to 28 days for Centrelink to assess your claim.

[ ]  Enrol the child in the child care service that was agreed by the practitioner.

[ ]  Provide supporting documentation from the practitioner to the provider and/or Centrelink.

[ ]  Confirm the child care enrolment in MyGov and notify the practitioner about the enrolment.

*Centrelink – Grandparent Foster and Kinship Carer Adviser (GFKCA) can talk with you about your circumstance and advise you how to make a successful CSS claim.* ***To speak with GFKCA call 1800 245 965*** *(see attached Support for grandparents, foster carers, kinship carers and other non-parent of children fact sheet).*

# What can I expect from my practitioner?

* The practitioner will support you with the application process if you need help.
* The practitioner will provide you with supporting documentation for your claim.
* The practitioner will reimburse pre-approved child care costs.

# What if my circumstances change? Who do I tell?

Notify Centrelink as soon as your circumstances change so you don’t accrue a debt. Best to do this in writing via your MyGov account.

# What happens if subsidy doesn’t cover the full cost of child care?

If the subsidy does not cover the full cost of child care, the Department will cover additional costs if they are pre-approved.

# Further Information

For additional information, please visit the following:

* [Australian Immunisation Handbook](https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/)
* [Creating a myGov account](https://my.gov.au/en/about/help/mygov-website/create-mygov-account)
* [Early Childhood Education and Care](https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about-early-childhood-education-and-care-australia)
* [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy Child Wellbeing=](https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/guide-additional-child-care-subsidy-child-wellbeing)